

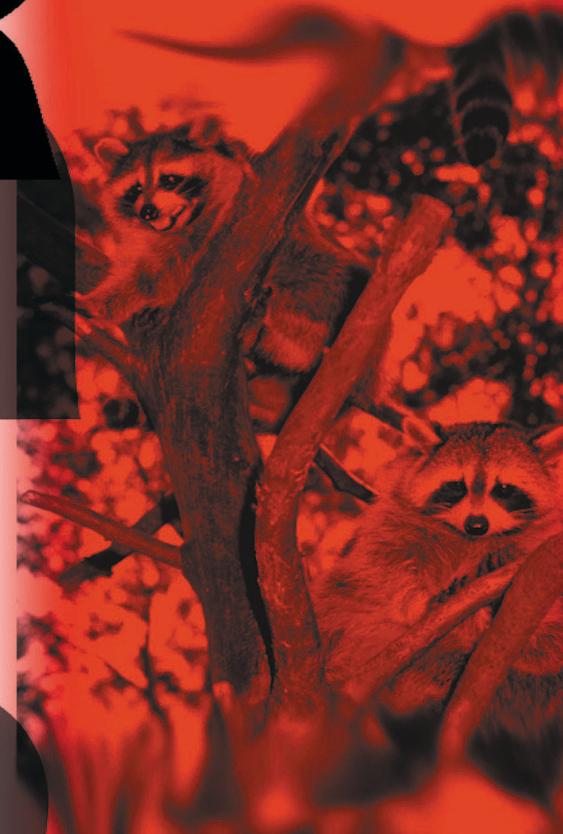
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**New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene**  
Michael R. Bloomberg, Mayor   Thomas R. Frieden, MD, MPH, Commissioner  
To report a bite, or to learn more about rabies, visit [nyc.gov/health](http://nyc.gov/health) or call 311.

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*Getting Them Off Your Property  
and Out of Your Home*



**Raccoons** can carry rabies, and rabid raccoons have been found in New York City.

Although, so far, there has not been a human case of rabies contracted from raccoons in New York City, this risk does exist and should be taken seriously.

To arrange for a raccoon to be picked up that appears to be staggering, convulsing, spitting, choking, or frothing at the mouth, call **Animal Care and Control** at 311, or your local police precinct.

### *What to Know About Raccoons*

The common name “raccoon” comes from an Indian word that means “he scratches with his hands.” The raccoon is easily identified by its black mask and ringed tail. Typically, adult raccoons are about 2 feet long and weigh between 10 and 30 pounds.

Raccoons are able to adapt to a variety of habitats, and thrive in urban areas like New York City because of abundant food availability. As a result, it is not unusual to encounter raccoons near your home.

### *Getting Raccoons Off Your Property*

When raccoons take up residency in your home, destroy your garden, or raid your garbage, they are either searching for food or a place to live. Raccoons are not picky eaters – they will eat anything from meat to vegetables to trash. Also, they are willing to live almost anywhere. Under ordinary conditions, they usually find a den in a hollow tree, but in urban areas, raccoons can live in rock piles, fireplace chimneys, hollow walls, attics, or beneath sewer drains.

### *Keeping Raccoons Out of Your Home*

There are several ways to prevent raccoons from being pests without exterminating them. The best strategy is to prevent access to food. Raccoons tend to feed at night. If raccoons are stealing food from your pet’s dish, try feeding your pet during the day and bringing the bowl inside before dark. (Better yet, always feed your pet inside, which helps make your home less attractive to other animals, as well.)

If raccoons are rummaging through your garbage, make it unreachable by purchasing a raccoon-proof garbage can, or by putting a weight on the lid so raccoons can’t open it. Always make sure that all your garbage is in the can and not on the ground.

If raccoons are already living in your home, there are measures you can take to get them out.

*Raccoons do not like bright lights or loud noises:*

- *Put bright lights in your attic and if you have any kind of flashing lights, use them.*
- *Put a radio in the attic and tune in to a rock or talk station, with the volume set as loud as you can stand it. Leave it on all day and night to disrupt the raccoon’s sleep.*

If none of these suggestions work, trapping may be the best option. *Never attempt to capture a raccoon by yourself!*

If you try to touch a wild raccoon, it may feel threatened and bite you. If you are bitten or scratched by a raccoon, consult a physician right away. You may need a tetanus shot or other medical treatment to control infection. You should also be evaluated for possible exposure to rabies. Biting incidents should be reported to the **New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene at 311**. Check your local phone book or veterinarian to find a professional trapper. NY State will provide a list of wildlife trappers: 718•482•4885 NYS DEC.

### *Maintaining a Raccoon-Proof Home*

When you think the raccoons have left, sprinkle Cayenne pepper around the area they entered through (*torn screens, open chimneys, or broken windows* are the most common points of entry).

Be sure to leave a light and radio on until there is absolutely no sign of activity. Finally, permanently seal all entrances. It will also help to prune back any tree branches that might have helped raccoons gain access to the roof or attic.

*Remember, raccoons will come back if you let them.*