



2026 Veterinary Advisory #2 Three Rabid Raccoons Detected in Midwood and Sheepshead Bay, Brooklyn

- Three rabid raccoons have been found in Midwood and Sheepshead Bay this year, suggesting westward movement of rabies among raccoons into Brooklyn.
- For current information on rabies and a map of animals testing positive for rabies in NYC, visit nyc.gov/health/rabies.
- Raccoon oral rabies vaccine baits will be distributed this spring in areas of Brooklyn and Queens to vaccinate raccoons and interrupt ongoing transmission.
- Veterinarians should ensure that their clients’ pets are up to date for rabies vaccination and educate pet owners regarding rabies prevention.
- Veterinarians should consider rabies in the differential diagnosis for any patient with a history of exposure to a potentially rabid wild or feral animal, a bite wound of unknown origin, or recent importation, and/or if presenting with progressive neurologic disease.

Please share with your colleagues in veterinary medicine and your staff.

April 20, 2026

Dear Colleagues,

Three rabid raccoons have been found in Midwood and Sheepshead Bay since January of this year, suggesting westward movement of the virus among raccoons into Brooklyn. In February 2026, a sick raccoon collected in Midwood, Brooklyn tested positive for rabies at the NYC Public Health Laboratory (PHL). There were no known human or pet exposures to the raccoon. In late March, the NYC Health Department received a report of a dog that encountered an unusually aggressive raccoon in West Midwood, Brooklyn. The raccoon was not available for testing and was presumed rabid. The dog was current on rabies vaccination at the time of the incident, given a booster rabies vaccine, and is being observed for 45 days. In April, a sick-acting raccoon collected from Marine Park (Sheepshead Bay, Brooklyn) tested positive at PHL. There were no known human or pet exposures to this raccoon.

Rabid raccoons were previously rarely reported in Brooklyn, with none detected from 1992 through 2009. From 2010 to 2025, most years had no reports, and the remaining years had only 1 or 2 reports each, with the exception of 2014 when 4 rabid raccoons were reported. The raccoons described above are the first detections of raccoon rabies in these areas of Brooklyn.

Laboratory-Confirmed Rabid Raccoons from Brooklyn, 1992-2025													
YEAR	1992 to 2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015 to 2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
# RABID RACCOONS	0	2	0	1	2	4	0	1	0	2	0	0	2

The rabies virus has adapted to raccoons, and there is a raccoon-specific variant of rabies virus present in NYC and across the East Coast of the US. This raccoon variant is transmitted most efficiently and most often between raccoons. Occasionally, spill-over events occur when a rabid raccoon transmits the virus to other animals (e.g., raccoon-to-cat, raccoon-to-skunk). In NYC and along the Atlantic Coast, rabid raccoons pose the greatest risk of rabies to pets and other domestic animals. Less commonly, rabid bats can also transmit rabies. Oral rabies vaccine (ORV) baiting is planned for Brooklyn and Queens this spring to interrupt ongoing transmission of the virus among raccoons in the treated areas.

Veterinarians, including those practicing in the Brooklyn neighborhoods in the area of the new detections, are reminded to consider rabies as part of the differential diagnosis for any animal presenting with a progressive neurological illness particularly if the animal is a stray, has a history of a bite wound of unknown origin or known exposure to a potentially rabid animal or rabies vector species (raccoons, skunks and bats), or, in a dog imported from a country where the [canine rabies](#) variant circulates.

Please refer to the recently released [Veterinary Advisory #1 Annual Rabies Summary, 2025](#), with additional details about rabies vaccination requirements for dogs and cats, and the [management guidance for pets exposed to rabies as well as pets that bite a person](#). View additional information about rabies, including NYC summary data at nyc.gov/health/rabies.

Educate clients to:

- Avoid contact with wild animals and stray animals.
- Make sure their dog or cat is up to date on its rabies vaccinations.
- Avoid leaving their pets outdoors unattended.
- Feed pets indoors.
- Avoid trying to separate animals that are fighting.
- Contact their veterinarian if their pet has been in contact with a raccoon, skunk, bat or any animal that might be rabid.

Report animal bites and suspect animal rabies cases to the NYC Health Department’s Veterinary Public Health Services (VPHS) Animal Bite Unit

During business hours	VPHS Animal Bite Unit (ABU)	646-364-1799
After business hours	NYC Poison Control Center	212-POISONS (212-764-7667)

Questions? Call the NYC Health Department

Questions on rabies exposures in pets, animal bites, and other animal-related issues	Veterinary Public Health Services	646-364-1783
Questions on rabies exposures in people, PEP, and other human-related rabies issues	Bureau of Communicable Disease	347-396-2600
After business hours	NYC Poison Control Center	212-764-7667

As always, we greatly appreciate your partnership.

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Visit our webpage for information and resources for veterinarians: [Zoonotic and Vector-borne Diseases: Information for Providers](#)

If you do not receive these alerts via email and would like to be added to the distribution list, email zivdu@health.nyc.gov

Report animal diseases to the NYC Health Department:

- Online through a [secure web-based reporting platform](#)
- Call 347-396-2600
- Fax the [Animal Disease Case Report form](#) to 347-396-2753

Report upon suspicion: Anthrax, brucellosis, glanders, influenza (novel with pandemic potential), mpox, plague, Q fever, SARS, tularemia

For rabies, call the Animal Bite Unit at 646-364-1799 to report suspect rabid animals or for assistance with pets exposed to rabies.

Report upon laboratory diagnosis: Arboviral encephalitides, carbapenem-resistant organism (CRO), leptospirosis, psittacosis, Rocky Mountain spotted fever, salmonellosis, tuberculosis

Report within 24 hours any outbreak or suspected outbreak of any disease, condition, or syndrome, of known or unknown etiology, which may pose a danger to public health.