



NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE
Alister F. Martin, MD, MPP
Commissioner

2026 Veterinary Alert #3

Oral Rabies Vaccine (ORV) Baits Vaccinating Raccoons in Queens and Brooklyn

- The New York City Health Department, in coordination with the United States Department of Agriculture and the NYC Department of Parks and Recreation, is vaccinating raccoons by distributing oral rabies vaccine (ORV) baits in targeted areas of Queens and Brooklyn for approximately two weeks, starting May 15, 2026.
- The targeted ORV is in response to ongoing detection of rabies-positive raccoons (see [Rabies Map](#)) and reports of rabid-acting raccoons in Queens and Brooklyn.
- ORV is done using the Raboral V-RG™ bait, which contains a liquid vaccinia-rabies glycoprotein (V-RG) recombinant virus vaccine; it does not contain the rabies virus.
- The baits are generally not harmful to dogs or cats, but a pet may vomit after eating a large number of them.
- Veterinarians should be prepared to answer questions from pet owners regarding ORV in NYC.

May 15, 2026

Dear Colleagues,

Rabid raccoons have been detected more frequently in previously affected areas of Queens and Brooklyn since 2022 and recently, in [new areas](#) of southern Brooklyn (see [Rabies Map](#)). To date this year, eight animals (1 raccoon and 1 skunk from Queens, 2 raccoons from Brooklyn, and 4 raccoons from Staten Island) have tested positive for rabies in New York City.

The NYC Health Department, in coordination with the United States Department of Agriculture and the NYC Department of Parks and Recreation, will conduct ORV baiting for 2 weeks in May targeting previously baited areas in Brooklyn and Queens, last done in October 2025, as well as areas with new rabies detections. ORV is intended to disrupt ongoing transmission among raccoons in the affected areas and prevent spillover into other wildlife, domestic animals, and people. The ORV program has routinely been used as a strategy to control rabies among raccoons as a part of annual vaccination efforts since 2014 and in response to rabies cluster events.

ORV in NYC is done using the Raboral V-RG™ bait, which contains a liquid vaccinia-rabies glycoprotein (V-RG) recombinant virus vaccine and is coated in brown, fish-scented attractant. The baits are distributed by hand and strategically placed in several parks and wooded sections of Brooklyn and Queens. There is a very low risk of human infection with the vaccinia virus after contact with the pink liquid vaccine. Exposure may cause skin lesions similar to those caused by smallpox vaccination. People who handle damaged bait should wear gloves or use a plastic bag.

Veterinarians in New York City should be prepared to answer questions from pet owners regarding ORV.

Veterinarians can advise clients as follows:

- It is not possible for a person or pet to get rabies from the vaccine because the vaccine does not contain the rabies virus; however, it does contain attenuated vaccinia virus.
- It is not harmful for people to touch an intact bait, but gloves are highly recommended.
- Anyone who has direct skin contact with the pink liquid vaccine should immediately wash the affected skin with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer and call the Poison Control Center at 212-764-7667 (212-POISONS).
- The bait packets have a strong fishmeal smell that is not attractive to people or most other animals.
- A label clearly identifies each bait packet that reads “Rabies Vaccine Live Vaccinia Vector. Do Not Disturb” and includes a phone number, 877-722-6725; callers will be routed to the Poison Control Center.
- Baits found near residences or in parks, but not in the open, should be left alone; baits out in the open where pets or children are more likely to encounter them should be thrown into deeper cover under trees or bushes while wearing gloves or using a plastic bag; dispose of damaged baits in regular trash.
- The baits are generally not harmful to dogs, cats, or other pets, but a pet may vomit if they consume a large number of baits. **Do not try to remove a packet from an animal’s mouth to avoid being bitten and to avoid contact with the liquid inside the bait.**
- **For information regarding rabies and ORV baiting, visit:** the [New York City Health Department](#) and [United States Department of Agriculture](#) and see prior [Veterinary Advisories](#), including 2026 [Veterinary Advisory #1: Annual Rabies Summary 2025](#).

As always, we greatly appreciate your partnership and cooperation.

-Asha Abdool, MPH, Maya Hajny Fernandez, MPH, Renee King, MPH, Kevin Lovingood, MPH, Ryan MacDonald, MPH, Christina Ng, MPH, Marc Paladini, MPH, Stephanea Roeser, MPH, Sally Slavinski, DVM, MPH, DACVPM

Zoonotic and Vector Borne Disease Unit, Bureau of Communicable Disease, ZIVDU@health.nyc.gov

-Mario Merlino, Norma Torres

Bureau of Veterinary and Pest Control Services Division of Environmental Health

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.