



Robert P. Astorino, Westchester County Executive

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## NEWS RELEASE

Sherlita Amler, MD, Commissioner, Department of Health  
Ned McCormack, Communications Director  
Contact: Caren Halbfinger (914) 813-5013 / after hours: 813-5000

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### **FREE RABIES CLINIC SUNDAY, OCTOBER 29 IN NEW ROCHELLE One-day vaccination clinic sponsored by the Westchester County Health Department**

Westchester County residents can bring their dogs, cats and ferrets in for free rabies vaccinations on **Sunday, Oct. 29 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Humane Society of Westchester, 70 Portman Road in New Rochelle.** No appointments are needed and walk-ins are welcome.

Cats and ferrets must be in carriers and dogs must be on a leash. Aggressive dogs must be muzzled. No examinations will be given and all pets must be supervised by an adult.

“Vaccinating your pet against rabies will protect your pet and your family if your pet has contact with a rabid or potentially rabid animal,” said Westchester County Health Commissioner, Sherlita Amler, MD.

Under New York State law, dogs and cats must receive their first rabies vaccine no later than four months after birth. A second rabies shot must be given within one year of the first vaccine, with additional booster shots given every one or three years after that, depending on the vaccine used. Owners who fail to get their pets vaccinated and keep the vaccinations up-to-date may be fined up to \$2,000.

Rabies is a fatal disease that is spread through the bite or saliva of infected animals. Those animals most commonly infected are raccoons, skunks, bats and foxes. However, domestic animals such as cats and dogs are also at risk because they can easily contract rabies from wild or stray animals.

A pet that is up-to-date with its rabies vaccinations would only need to get a booster dose of vaccine within five days of the pet’s exposure to a known or suspect rabid animal. Animals not up-to-date with rabies vaccinations would need to be quarantined or potentially euthanized following contact with a rabid or suspect-rabid animal.

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A change in an animal's behavior is often the first sign of rabies. A rabid animal may become either abnormally aggressive or unusually tame. It may lose fear of people and become docile or it may become particularly excited and irritable. Staggering, spitting and frothing at the mouth are sometimes noted in infected animals. Adults should encourage children to avoid touching unfamiliar animals and to immediately tell an adult if they have been bitten or scratched by an animal.

All animal bites or contacts with animals suspected of having rabies must be reported to the Westchester County Health Department at (914) 813-5000. After hours, callers should follow instructions in the recorded message to report a public health emergency 24 hours a day.

To learn more about rabies and its prevention, visit the Health Department's website at [www.westchestergov.com/health](http://www.westchestergov.com/health), like us on Facebook at facebook.com/wchealthdept or follow us on Twitter @wchealthdept.