

News Release

Date: May 9, 2025

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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RABIES ALERT: TABBY CAT CONFIRMED RABID IN KATONAH

Anyone Who Had Contact Should Call the Westchester County Health Department

(Katonah, NY) — The Westchester County Department of Health is notifying Katonah residents that a tabby cat of average size that roamed around the village has tested positive for rabies.

The County Health Department wants to speak with anyone who may have been bitten or scratched by this cat through Monday, May 5. The cat was an unvaccinated pet that roamed outdoors and wore a collar.

Two people who came in contact with the cat are being treated to prevent rabies. Health officials want to determine if anyone else was exposed to the rabies virus, which can be deadly. If you or a family member had contact with this cat, call (914) 813-5000 as soon as possible to be evaluated for preventive rabies treatment.

Health Commissioner Dr. Sherlita Amler said: “Rabies is fatal, but can be prevented with post-exposure treatment prior to onset of symptoms. To avoid rabies, steer clear of wild animals and strays. If you see an injured or sick animal, call police. Teach your children not to approach or handle animals they don’t know, even if they appear young, injured or friendly, and to tell you right away if they are bitten or scratched by any animal. It is also important to keep your pets’ rabies vaccinations up to date, and to bat proof your home. Discourage wild animals from visiting your yard by securely covering trash cans and keeping pet food and water indoors.”

Unusual behavior may be the first sign of rabies in an animal. A rabid animal may become either abnormally aggressive or unusually tame. It may lose fear of people and become excited and irritable, or appear particularly passive and lethargic. Staggering and frothing at the mouth are sometimes noted.

Residents should never approach or touch a stray or wild animal. Residents who see a stray or wild animal acting strangely should alert police or animal control officers to avoid possible exposure to rabies. Residents are also advised to keep their trashcan lids securely sealed, remove wild bird feeders, and avoid leaving pet food outdoors.

Any physical contact with a wild or unfamiliar animal should be reported to a health care provider. All animal bites or contact with animals suspected of having rabies must be reported to the County Health Department.

New York State law requires dogs, cats and ferrets to be vaccinated against rabies and receive regular booster shots. For more information, go to www.westchestergov.com/health or call the RABIES INFOLINE at (914) 813-5010.

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