



December 6, 2018

Health Department
Healthy Environments &
Communicable Disease
Halton Region
1151 Bronte Road
Oakville ON L6M 3L1
Fax: 905-825-8797

To: Halton District School Board
Halton Catholic District School Board

RE: Rabies in Halton Region

Dear Superintendent:

I am writing to provide an update on rabies in Halton Region and request your assistance to educate staff and students within your school board on rabies prevention.

The raccoon rabies strain virus is currently circulating within the raccoon and skunk population in Hamilton and the immediate surrounding areas, including Halton Region. The Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry continues to conduct surveillance, testing, and vaccine baiting in attempts to control rabies in wildlife. So far in 2018, there have been 96 positive cases of rabies in Ontario, with one positive bat found in Halton Region.

Please provide the school community with the following information on rabies prevention, which includes reporting of potential rabies exposures to the Health Department:

Rabies is a fatal disease that affects the central nervous system of warm blooded animals, including humans. The virus spreads through exposure to saliva from infected animals – bites, scratches, or licks on broken skin and mucous membranes such as eyes or mouth. After someone is exposed to rabies, timely administration of rabies treatment can prevent rabies infection as it is only effective if administered before any symptoms occur.

The Health Department is reminding staff and students to:

- avoid unfamiliar cats and dogs
- not pet, feed, or touch sick or dead animals and to observe wild animals from a distance
- wash animal bites and scratches with soap and water and seek medical attention right away
- keep their pet dogs and cats up-to-date with their rabies vaccinations
- not allow their pets to roam free and keep them indoors at night to prevent contact with wild animals

Regional Municipality of Halton

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- take pets that come in contact with a raccoon or other wild animal to a veterinarian for follow-up
- not attempt to relocate wild animals

Anyone who has been bitten or scratched by an animal or had physical contact with wildlife should seek medical attention immediately and report the exposure to the Health Department by dialing 311 as soon as possible.

For more information on rabies, please visit www.halton.ca/rabies.

Thank you for your assistance with this request. Should you have any questions, please contact me.

Sincerely,



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