

# PORTAGE COUNTY COMBINED GENERAL HEALTH DISTRICT



Portage County Administration Building  
449 South Meridian Street  
Ravenna, Ohio 44266  
DuWayne O. Porter, M.P.H., R.S.  
Health Commissioner

Phone Area Code 330-296-9919  
Fax: Area Code 330-297-3597  
E-mail: [pchd@portageco.com](mailto:pchd@portageco.com)  
Web: [www.co.portage.oh.us/dept/healthdepartment.htm](http://www.co.portage.oh.us/dept/healthdepartment.htm)

Press Release  
October 17, 2011

Becky Lehman, PIO  
330-296-9919 ext. 137

## For Immediate Release

The Portage County Health Department received notification that Summit County Public Health had a dog owned by a family in Twinsburg that tested positive for rabies. Tests performed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention showed the type of rabies carried by the dog was raccoon strain. The dog had been ill for several days before it died on October 10. No person had been bitten, and the person who may have been exposed to the ill dog's saliva has been identified and given recommendations for disease prevention.

The rabies virus is found in the saliva of infected animals, most often raccoons, skunks and bats. It is spread by a bite or a scratch. The virus infects the central nervous system in mammals and is considered 100% fatal. Symptoms of rabies include unusual, aggressive behavior, an inability to eat or drink, drooling or foaming at the mouth, staggering, circling, seizures, coma and death. The best way to protect your family from rabies is to avoid contact with wild animals and animals that you don't know, and to vaccinate your pets against rabies and keep them current with their shots. If bitten, call your doctor. Call your veterinarian if your pet has contact with a wild animal. Rabies exposures in Portage County should be reported to the Portage County Health Department, 330-296-9919.

The Portage County Health Department, in conjunction with the Ohio Departments of Health and Natural Resources, in partnership with the U.S. Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Wildlife Services program, conducted its fall oral rabies raccoon vaccination operation in the cities of Aurora and Streetsboro in September 2011.

"This underlines the importance of pet owners getting their pets vaccinated," DuWayne Porter, Portage County Health Commissioner said. Pets need to be vaccinated for rabies initially after they have reached the age of 3 months, and then revaccinated one year later and thereafter at not more than 36 month intervals.

For more information on rabies, please visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at [www.cdc.gov/rabies](http://www.cdc.gov/rabies) or contact Becky Lehman, Portage County Health Department, Health Educator at 330-296-9919, ext. 137.