

# PORTAGE COUNTY COMBINED GENERAL HEALTH DISTRICT

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## **Portage County Health Department reminds residents of the ever-present threat of rabies**

Rabies is a fatal viral zoonosis and a serious public health threat. All mammals, such as raccoons, skunks, foxes and bats, are believed susceptible to the disease. Rabies is transmitted when the virus is introduced into bite wounds, open cuts in skin, or onto mucous membranes from saliva.

The Portage County Health Department is reminding residents to protect themselves from the threat of rabies by following these precautions:

- **Do not feed, touch, or adopt wild animals** and be cautious around stray cats and dogs.
- Teach children to leave wildlife alone and be sure that your child knows to tell you if an animal bites or scratches them.
- Have your pet cats, dogs, and ferrets vaccinated for rabies and keep their vaccinations current.
- Keep trash can lids secure. Open containers can attract wildlife.
- Feed pets indoors. Never leave food outdoors that can attract wildlife.
- Report any bite incidents to your local health department and call your doctor for medical advice.

“Residents should be vigilant and not interact with or feed wildlife,” says Mary Helen Smith, environmental health director for the Portage County Health Department. “Feed pets indoors and keep trash can lids secure to avoid attracting wildlife into your yard.”

To report a bite incident or possible rabies exposure, contact Judi Rettig at 330-296-9919, ext. 101.

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