

January 18, 2018

RABIES ALERT – EAST NAPLES AREA



Contact:

Andrea McKinney

andrea.mckinney@flhealth.gov

239-252-8049

Naples, Fla. – The Florida Department of Health in Collier County (DOH-Collier) is notifying the neighborhoods surrounding the intersection of Bayshore Drive and Tamiami Trail East of a bat which tested positive for rabies. The bat was found outside a store at the Gulf Gate Plaza on Wednesday, January 10, 2018. The bat was taken to a local veterinary clinic by a man and woman, approximately 50-70 years-of-age, who may be visiting from Switzerland. DOH-Collier is seeking to identify these individuals to assess their rabies risk. Extensive efforts to locate these individuals have been unsuccessful thus far.

If you, a family member or someone you know handled a bat found at the Gulf Gate Plaza please immediately contact DOH-Collier at 239-252-8226 during regular business hours or 239-293-3010 after hours. **Anyone who has recently handled a bat should contact DOH-Collier to be assessed for rabies risk.**

Residents and visitors in should be aware that rabies is present in the wild animal population, and domestic animals are at risk if not vaccinated. The public is asked to maintain a heightened awareness.

An animal with rabies could infect other wild animals or domestic animals that have not been vaccinated against rabies. All domestic animals should be vaccinated against rabies, and contact with all wildlife should be avoided, particularly bats, raccoons, foxes, skunks, otters, bobcats and coyotes.

The following advice is issued:

- Keep rabies vaccinations up to date for all pets.
- If your pet is bitten by a wild animal, seek veterinary assistance for the animal immediately and contact Collier County Domestic Animal Services at 239-252-7387.
- Call Collier County Domestic Animal Services to remove stray animals from your neighborhood.
- **Do not** handle, feed, or unintentionally attract wild animals by leaving pet food outside, or garbage cans open.
- **Never** adopt wild animals or bring them into your home.
- Teach children **never** to handle unfamiliar animals, wild or domestic, even if they appear friendly.
- Prevent bats from entering living quarters or occupied spaces in homes, churches, schools, and other similar areas where they might come in contact with people and pets.
- Persons who have been bitten or scratched by wild or domestic animals should seek medical attention and report the injury to DOH-Collier at 239-252-8226.

Rabies is a disease of the nervous system that can cause paralysis and is fatal to warm blooded animals and humans. The virus is spread through saliva, and humans may become infected through a bite wound, scratch or exposure of a fresh cut to saliva of a rabid animal. The only treatment for human exposure to rabies is rabies specific immune globulin and rabies immunization. Appropriate treatment started soon after the exposure will protect an exposed person from the disease.

For more information on rabies, visit the DOH website at <http://www.floridahealth.gov/diseases-and-conditions/rabies/index.html> or the CDC website at <https://www.cdc.gov/rabies/>.

About the Florida Department of Health

The department, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and Twitter at [@HealthyFla](#). For more information about the Florida Department of Health please visit www.FloridaHealth.gov.