

## **Why we ask About Rabies Vaccination**

If you've applied to adopt a cat or kitten from CCHS, our staff has probably asked you if you plan to allow the cat to roam freely outdoors and/or if the other cats and dogs in your home, or living on your property, have been vaccinated against Rabies.

If your answer is "no," we may deny your application out of concern for the long-term health of the animal you are applying to adopt. If we approve your application, we will strongly urge you to bring all your dogs and cats up-to-date on their vaccines, especially the rabies vaccine.

Why is the rabies vaccine so important?

(1) It is not just a good idea, it's the law. Champaign County's Animal Control Ordinance (Ord. Number 871, Article 2, Section 21) requires all cats and dogs be inoculated against rabies. (In addition, State law requires that all dogs in Illinois be rabies vaccinated. If you live outside Champaign County, check your local animal control ordinance.)

(2) Rabies is present in Illinois. As recent as 2016, an Illinois cat tested positive for rabies.

In wild animals, rabies is most common in bats, skunks, raccoons, and foxes. It has also been found in deer and large rodents. In Illinois, rabid bats can be found anywhere, and although they carry and transmit the virus, most bats are not infected with the virus.

(3) Rabies is fatal to an unvaccinated animal.

(4) Consequences of rabies exposure to your pets and family. If one of your unvaccinated animals contracts rabies, or has confirmed exposure to an animal with rabies, all of your pets (and livestock) that were exposed to the infected or exposed animal will likely be subject to quarantine, and any such animals that were unvaccinated for rabies at the time of exposure may be subject to euthanasia.

All persons who were exposed to the infected or exposed animal will need a series of rabies post-exposure prophylaxis injections (PEP), administered over a 2-week period, and at a cost of approximately \$3,000 per person. Your veterinarian and veterinary staff, as well as anyone else who had contact with the infected animal, will also be considered "exposed" and will need to receive PEP.

Keep in mind, once a case of rabies has been confirmed, decisions about what happens to your animal, and the people and animals exposed to it, may no longer be yours to make. Local and/or State authorities will be involved in any case of rabies.

## **What Should you Do?**

If you have unvaccinated pets, please talk to your veterinarian about the rabies vaccine and other vaccines available for highly contagious diseases.

If you need assistance in trapping animals on your property, or need financial assistance in getting your pets vaccinated, please speak with our staff about available resources, or contact the head of our Humane Education and Investigations Department, Alicia Schneider at 217-344-7297. Alicia can assist with trapping of animals and direct you to resources to help with veterinary services.