



QUARANTINE FACT SHEET

According to State Law, you are being required to quarantine your animal for a period of 10 days. This law is intended to protect the injured person(s) from any risk of rabies, a deadly neurological disease.

What are the guidelines of quarantine?

The animal should be confined to an interior room of the building so that if it escapes, it is still confined within the home. Caretakers should be limited to 1 or 2 people. If/when taken outside, the animal must be leashed and under the caretaker's control. Take the animal onto your own property, away from other people and animals. The animal should be checked each day for signs of illness; contact your veterinarian and the Communicable Disease office if you observe anything abnormal. In addition, the animal should not have any elective procedures or unnecessary medical treatments during the 10-day quarantine.

My animal only scratched someone. Why do I have to quarantine?

Rabies is a viral infection transmitted in the saliva of an infected mammal. Spread of rabies is usually through bites, but may also occur as a result of scratches. This is because dogs, cats and ferrets frequently lick their paws and therefore saliva may be present on the toenails of the animal, which then break the skin of the victim.

Why do I have to quarantine my healthy pet?

If your animal happens to have caught rabies, it could carry the virus in its saliva for several days before it begins to act sick. You are not able to observe your pet 24 hours a day, and a contact may occur while your pet is not under your supervision. For example, your pet could be exposed to a bat during the night and you may not even be aware a bat was in your home, or your pet may have gotten loose/lost and come across another infected animal.

Why is the quarantine 10 days?

After the rabies virus multiplies in the brain, it travels to the saliva of the animal. At this time, your pet is now able to spread the disease. Research has shown that once the rabies virus is present in the saliva of your pet, the animal will be sick, show signs and symptoms of rabies, or die within 10 days. Therefore, if the animal stays healthy for the 10-day quarantine period, the rabies virus was not present in the saliva at the time of the bite/scratch and there would be no risk of rabies to those that were injured.

Why must the animal be kept inside or leashed the entire 10 days?

This ensures that the animal can be readily observed for the 10 days. If the animal shows any signs of rabies, it allows time to treat the bite victim for rabies exposure (post-exposure treatment consists of human rabies immune globulin and a series of rabies vaccinations given over a 2-week period). It also ensures that the animal cannot run away, be injured, or potentially expose any other animals or people during that time.

Why quarantine an animal with up-to-date rabies vaccinations?

There is no cure for rabies once a person is showing symptoms. For this reason, even vaccinated animals must be quarantined. A fully-vaccinated dog, cat or ferret is unlikely to become infected with rabies, but rare cases have occurred.

What are the signs and symptoms of rabies that I should be watching for in my animal?

There is no single symptom of rabies. The animal may exhibit changes in the sound of its voice, changes in appetite or ability to eat/drink (such as difficulty swallowing), or experience weakness, tremors or signs of paralysis; your pet may become unusually shy or unusually approachable. The most consistent sign of rabies is a change in your pet's "expected" or "normal" behavior.