

## TOWNSHIP OF BLOOMFIELD

**For Immediate Release:** 9/22/23

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### **Bloomfield Mayor Michael Venezia Praises Health Department's Rapid Response to Rabid Skunk Bite**

*Township advising to remain vigilant when outdoors*

**BLOOMFIELD, NJ** – This past weekend an individual was bitten by a wild skunk in the area of Bloomfield and Glen Ridge, prompting a rapid and comprehensive response by the Township. The skunk was confirmed to have tested positive for rabies, highlighting the importance of swift action to safeguard public health and safety.

“Upon receiving reports of the skunk bite, the Bloomfield Health Department immediately coordinated efforts with local animal control authorities to ensure a prompt and effective response to this unfortunate incident,” **said Bloomfield Mayor Venezia.** “Please make sure that your pets are up-to-date with their rabies vaccines and if your pet is bitten, please make sure to contact your veterinarian immediately. We appreciate the cooperation and understanding of our residents as we work together to prevent potential health risks and maintain a safe community for all.”

Animal control officers were dispatched promptly to address the skunk encounter, ensuring the animal was contained and removed from the area to prevent further risks to the community. The individual who was bitten received immediate medical attention and treatment.

The Township of Bloomfield is releasing material advising residents and visitors to be mindful of their surroundings when engaging in outdoor activities in the Bloomfield and Glen Ridge area, and encourages residents to remain vigilant by reporting any unusual animal behavior, bites, or encounters with potentially rabid animals to animal control authorities. Additionally, residents are reminded to ensure their pets are up-to-date on rabies vaccinations and to exercise caution when interacting with unfamiliar or wild animals.

Additionally, the Township is providing the following list of recommendations:

- Do not touch, feed, or unintentionally attract wild animals with open garbage cans or litter.
- Never adopt wild animals or bring them into your home. Do not try to nurse sick, wild animals to health. Call animal control or an animal rescue agency for assistance.
- Teach children never to handle unfamiliar animals, wild or domestic, even if they appear friendly. "Love your own, leave other animals alone" is a good principle for children to learn to reduce the risk of exposure to rabid animals.
- Maintain homes and other buildings so bats cannot get inside.
- If a bat is in your home, do not release the bat outdoors until after speaking with animal control or public health officials.
- After consulting with animal control or public health officials, the bat may need to be captured for rabies testing to determine if you need preventive treatment.

- Wash the wound thoroughly with soap and water and seek medical attention immediately.
- The local health department or the county animal control office also should be notified immediately. The animal should be captured without damaging its head and only if direct contact with the animal can be avoided.
- If an apparently healthy domestic dog, cat or ferret bites a human, it must be captured, confined and professionally observed for 10 days following the bite. If the animal remains healthy during this period, it would not have transmitted rabies at the time of the bite. There is no reliable observation period established for non-domestic animals.
- If a person is bitten by a non-domestic animal and it is available for testing, testing should be done immediately. All animal bites should be reported to the local animal control office.
- If an animal suspected of having rabies cannot be observed or tested, or if it tests positive for rabies, treatment of the individual with rabies immune globulin and the vaccine series must begin immediately. Vaccine injections are given in the arm.
- People in high-risk occupations--for example, veterinarians, wildlife biologists, wildlife rehabilitators, animal control officers and taxidermists--should consider getting the rabies vaccine to protect themselves from exposures that could occur in their work. This type of vaccination (pre-exposure vaccination) consists of three rabies vaccine injections.
- These vaccinated persons should have their rabies titers tested every two years. If their titer falls below 1:5 they should receive a booster vaccination. A person already vaccinated and later exposed to rabies must receive two booster injections three days apart immediately after exposure.

If you are bitten, please make sure to contact the Bloomfield Health Department at (973) 680-4024, as well as your primary care provider/emergency care services. The Bloomfield Health Department and animal control are actively monitoring the surrounding areas daily for any unusual activity and remain in communication with the State of New Jersey Department of Health Division of Communicable Disease Services regarding the situation.

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