

Mission:

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



Ron DeSantis
Governor

Vision: To be the **Healthiest State** in the Nation

For Immediate Release: Friday, March 01, 2019 **Contact:** Daniel Chacretton (352) 569-3106

Sumter County Health Officials Urge Residents to Avoid Contact with Wild and Stray Animals to Prevent Rabies

Bushnell- The Florida Department of Health in Sumter County urges residents to reduce their risk of rabies exposure by avoiding contact with wild and stray animals. If you or a family member are bitten or scratched by a wild or stray animal, seek medical care as soon as possible. Animal bites require medical evaluation for rabies preventive care.

Rabies is a rare but very serious, usually fatal disease spread by infected animals. Rabies infection is still present in wild animal populations throughout Florida. Most recently, a rabid raccoon was reported in Sumter County in February 2019.

Dogs, cats and certain exotic mammalian pets should be vaccinated against rabies. Contact with wild or stray animals should be avoided, especially raccoons, bats, bobcats and foxes.

Rabies can be prevented after an exposure. If you were possibly exposed to rabies, it is important that you seek medical care as soon as possible. Receiving rabies vaccines can be lifesaving.

Health officials advise that:

- All pets should have current rabies vaccinations.
- Do not allow your pets to run free. Follow leash laws by keeping pets and livestock secured on your property.
- If your pet or livestock are bitten by a wild animal, seek veterinary assistance for the animal immediately and contact Sumter County Animal Control at (352) 689-4400.
- Avoid contact with all wild or stray animals, especially raccoons, bats, bobcats and foxes.
- All persons with any exposure incident, including bites and scratches with a wild animal, should contact their medical provider or the Florida Department of Health in Sumter County at (352) 569-3102.

About the Florida Department of Health

The department works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

Follow us on Twitter at [@HealthyFla](#) and on [Facebook](#). For more information about the Florida Department of Health please visit [www.FloridaHealth.gov](#). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is an additional resource for health-related topics which can be visited at [www.cdc.gov](#).

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in Sumter County**

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