



## THE BASICS: RABIES & YOUR CAT

### WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Rabies is a fatal viral disease that attacks the nervous system and can affect any mammal, including cats and people. Many cat owners don't realize that rabies vaccination is just as important for cats as it is for dogs. In fact, twice as many cats as dogs are reported to have rabies each year in the US.

- Cats are natural hunters and are more likely than dogs to come into contact with bats, the primary carrier of rabies in Oregon.
- An unvaccinated cat that has contact with a potentially rabid animal may face quarantine or euthanasia under Oregon law.
- Rabies is always fatal once symptoms appear. There is no treatment or cure for infected animals.
- Rabies is a zoonotic disease, meaning it can be transmitted from animals to people, typically through a bite.
- While Oregon state law requires rabies vaccinations for dogs, it does not currently require it statewide for cats. However, Four Corners Veterinary Clinic requires rabies vaccinations for cats for the safety of our staff.
- Even indoor cats can be exposed to rabies. Bats can enter homes through small openings in attics, chimneys, and walls.



### WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Visit [oregonvma.org](http://oregonvma.org) and search "Rabies"

## WHY IT'S SO IMPORTANT TO VACCINATE YOUR CAT

- Cats can come into contact with bats far more often than other pets, as cats are natural predators.
- Because rabies vaccination is not required statewide for cats in Oregon, many cats go unvaccinated, increasing their risk.
- Vaccinating your cat protects them, protects your family, and creates a buffer zone between your household and potentially rabid wildlife.
- If your unvaccinated cat has contact with a bat or other wild animal, the consequences can be severe—including mandatory quarantine for four months or euthanasia and rabies testing.

## SYMPTOMS OF RABIES IN CATS

Rabies symptoms in cats may include:

- **Sudden changes in behavior or temperament**
- **Unusual aggression or fearfulness**
- **Excessive vocalization**
- **Drooling or difficulty swallowing**
- **Loss of coordination or staggering**
- **Paralysis**
- **Seizures**



If your cat is displaying unusual behavior or you suspect rabies exposure, contact your veterinarian immediately. Do not handle a potentially rabid animal.

## PREVENTING RABIES IN YOUR CAT

- Keep your cat's rabies vaccination current. Your veterinarian will recommend the best schedule for your cat.

- Keep your cat indoors whenever possible to significantly reduce the risk of wildlife encounters.
- If your cat does go outdoors, provide supervision or a secure enclosure.
- Seal openings in your home's attic, basement, chimney, and porch that could allow bats to enter.
- If you find a bat in your home, do not let your cat near it. Safely contain the bat without touching it and contact your local animal control.
- Avoid feeding pets outdoors, and keep garbage secured to avoid attracting wildlife.

## WHAT TO DO IF YOUR CAT IS EXPOSED

If your cat has been bitten by, scratched by, or had contact with a wild animal (especially a bat):

- Contact your veterinarian immediately
- If possible, safely contain the wild animal without direct contact so it can be tested for rabies. Do not destroy or dispose of the animal.
- Report the incident to your local animal control.
- If your cat's rabies vaccination is current, your veterinarian will advise on revaccination and a 45-day observation period. If your cat is not vaccinated, quarantine for four months or euthanasia may be required.

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Visit [oregonvma.org](http://oregonvma.org) or [cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov) and search "Rabies"