

10 Ways to Reduce Your Risk of Rabies

1. Vaccinate your pets against rabies.
2. Don't keep wild animals as pets. Americans keep more than 1.5 million exotic animals as pets -- animals that cannot be vaccinated against rabies.
3. Do not handle wildlife -- dead or alive. Although the virus won't survive very long in dead animals, you should wear moisture-proof gloves before picking them up.
4. Avoid animals displaying unnatural behavior. Wild animals that are unusually friendly or displaying other unnatural behaviors may have the rabies virus.
5. Discourage contact between pets and wildlife. Don't let your pets roam or encourage them to interact with unfamiliar domestic or wild animals.
6. Feed your pets indoors. Leaving food outside often attracts stray dogs, cats, and wildlife to your yard.
7. Animal-proof your trash. Make sure your trash lids are locked, and don't leave bags of garbage outside the cans.
8. Prevent wild animals from getting into the house. Prune tree branches that overhang the roof. Keep screens on windows and cover small openings, such as chimneys, furnace ducts, and eaves.
9. Report all stray animals to animal control. Stray animals may not be vaccinated for rabies. They also run a high risk of exposure to wild animals who carry the disease.
10. Give your child some guidelines to follow. Do not frighten young children, but make sure they learn some basic rules about protecting themselves from strange or unfamiliar animals.