

## What You Need to Do When Your Pet Has Bitten or Scratched a Person

Animals bite/scratch for many reasons. As biting/scratching may be an early symptom of rabies, all animal bites/scratches are followed up by a Public Health Inspector to ensure the person who was bitten receives the appropriate treatment if needed. Rabies is a fatal disease that is transmitted through saliva during a bite or scratch.

- When your pet has bitten or scratched someone, it is important to get your pet under control to prevent further bites or scratches from happening.
- Help the injured person by providing first aid or calling for help. Be sure to provide your name, address and phone number to the injured person.
- Return your pet to your home and keep them in a secure area away from people and other animals (such as in a fenced yard/kennel).
- Check your pet's medical records so you can provide information on when the pet was last vaccinated against rabies.
- All biting and scratching incidents must be reported to the health unit by anyone who has become aware of the bite. It is likely that if the injured person required medical attention, that the hospital or police department will notify the health unit. A Public Health Inspector will then contact you to do a risk assessment to ensure the person bitten/scratched was not exposed to rabies at the time of the bite.

The public health inspector will likely require you to do the following:

1. To **not euthanize** your pet (put down).
2. To not vaccinate the pet against rabies until after the 10 day confinement period has passed.
3. To keep your pet at home under your control for a period of 10 days (this is not meant to be a punishment for your pet).
4. To observe the health of your pet. If the pet begins to behave differently, shows signs of illness such as difficulty swallowing, seizures, paralysis or dies or runs away, contact the health unit right away.

Once the 10 day period has passed, a public health inspector may call or visit to observe the health of your pet. The person bitten/scratched will then be informed if there is a concern regarding rabies or not.

- You must then take your pet to the veterinarian to update the rabies vaccination and provide a copy of the vaccination certificate to the health unit.



For more information, please call the Health ACTION Line at **1-800-660-5853** or visit our website at **[www.healthunit.org](http://www.healthunit.org)**