

Elburn Animal Hospital Newsletter  
September 2011

### Welcome

The first part of our newsletter for the month of September focuses on "Rabies Awareness" Every September around the globe many countries focus on rabies by celebrating World Rabies Day! The purpose of this global event is to raise awareness of this deadly virus, how to prevent it and hopefully to eventually eradicate it. The Alliance for Rabies Control was started by a group of researchers in 2006. This group was joined by partners around the globe and began World Rabies Day. Since 2007 this group has held events in 135 countries educating over 150 million people about this deadly virus and vaccinating 4.6 million dogs!

A portion of our newsletter this month is going to be dedicated to chickens! It seems that more and more towns are allowing people to have back yard chickens. One of our vet techs, Kathy, has worked for Elburn Animal Hospital for 9 years and has quite a bit of personal experience in raising and caring for chickens, since she herself has many. Kathy has written an article to share some of her knowledge on raising chickens and some important facts. Hope you enjoy our newsletter!

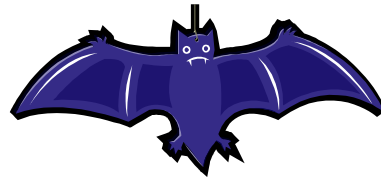
### What is rabies?

Rabies is a deadly virus that is carried in the saliva, brain tissue and spinal fluid of an infected animal. It attacks the central nervous system and is usually transmitted through a bite wound.

### What animals can get rabies?

All mammals can be infected by rabies. Of the wild animals, rabies is most common in bats, skunks, raccoons and foxes. However the disease has been found in deer and large rodents such as woodchucks. Smaller mammals such as chipmunks, gerbils, guinea pigs, mice, hamsters, rabbits and squirrels rarely get rabies. Cats, dogs, horses and livestock can get rabies if not properly vaccinated. Humans can get rabies too. Most

of the recent cases in the United States of human contracting rabies have come from bats. Out of 33 reported cases of rabies in Illinois so far this year, 32 have been bats. Reptiles, birds, fish and insects do not get rabies.



### What are the signs of rabies and how are people exposed?

When you think of seeing an animal with rabies you automatically think of extreme foaming at the mouth from things you have seen on T.V., not so! Usually the first sign is strange behavior. If you are in an area where you wouldn't expect to see a wild animal, especially if they try to approach you, use extreme caution, they could be rabid. If an animal that is normally very tame and friendly becomes hostile and aggressive, consider it could be rabid. Other signs include difficulty walking, as well as a sickly looking appearance. Exposure to rabies typically occurs through a bite wound. It could also occur through the transmission of infected saliva through a cut on the skin or mucous membranes such as nose, mouth and eyes. An animal usually dies within one week of showing symptoms of rabies. Symptoms of rabies in a person can be very similar to those of the flu. Headache, fever, weakness, these symptoms may last for days. There can also be a prickly or itchy sensation at the site of the bite. Within days it will progress to anxiety, cerebral dysfunction, confusion, agitation, and later to delirium, agitation, and hallucinations. Once clinical signs of rabies appear, survival is rare.

### What should I do if bitten by an animal?

The first thing you should do immediately is thoroughly wash the bite wound with soap and water and get medical attention. You will also need to notify the health department and the county animal control office. If bitten by some ones pet, a police report will need to be filed and certain protocol has to be followed. Each county has a different protocol. In Kane County, if the pet is current on their rabies vaccine, the owner will have to take them to their vet within 24 hours for a rabies observation exam. The pet will have to return to their vet on the 10<sup>th</sup> day for another exam, or the rabies observation release exam. If the pet is "not" current on their rabies vaccine, they will have to be impounded for ten days at an animal hospital starting immediately. If the pet is healthy during this time period, it could not have transmitted rabies at the time of the bite. If a person is bitten by a wild animal and the animal is available, it should be tested immediately. Wild animal bites need to be reported to animal control as well.

### If bitten by an infected animal, what is the treatment for rabies?

If an animal tests positive for rabies, or if the animal is not available for testing, treatment should be done right away. There is a series of vaccinations that will have to be given. These are known as postexposure prophylaxis or PEP. This consists of one dose of immune globulin and four doses of rabies vaccine over a 14 day period. The rabies immune globulin and first rabies vaccine should be given as soon as possible after exposure. Additional doses of rabies vaccine are to be given on days 3, 7 and 14. The vaccines are relatively painless and are given in the arm.

People like wildlife rehabbers, veterinarians and animal control officers frequently have already been vaccinated for the rabies vaccine. These people should have their titers tested every 2 years, and if their titer falls below 1:5 they should receive a booster. A person vaccinated and later exposed to rabies should

receive two booster injections three days apart immediately after exposure.

### What is my pet is bitten by a rabid animal?

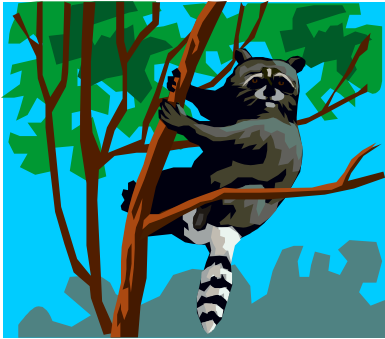
If your pet has been in a fight with another animal call your veterinarian. A vaccinated pet may have to get another injection of rabies vaccine as soon as possible. Animals not current on their rabies vaccine or that have never been vaccinated have to be confined in an animal hospital for 6 months or euthanized.



The World Rabies Day website listed 5 things you can do to get involved:

- 1) Vaccinate your pets! Keep them current on their rabies vaccine.
- 2) Tell your friends; inform them of World Rabies Day.
- 3) Volunteer; you can organize a local World Rabies Day event. Contact your local health department, animal control department and find out how to get involved.
- 4) Donate
- 5) Shop to make a difference. Go to [www. World Rabies Day.org](http://www.WorldRabiesDay.org) and buy their products! This site also has fun things for kids to do to help them become educated.

Just remember, don't ever approach a strange animal, whether domestic or wild. The cute little raccoon in your yard may be cute, but you should never attempt to pick it up.



### Chickens in your back yard

You may not have considered a chicken as a pet, but they are becoming the new urban companion. With so many food recalls in the news, we are becoming more wary of our food sources. What better way to ensure the quality of your eggs than to raise your own hens!

Some cities do allow chickens as pets, so check with your local authorities for restrictions. When purchasing chickens, it is best to buy chicks from a reputable hatchery that will sex and vaccinate your chicks, and get at least two. Some cities do not allow roosters (male chickens) and you do not want more than one rooster anyway. Do your homework when deciding what breed of chicken you want. Some are better egg layers; some are prettier, fancier, friendlier, smaller, larger, calmer etc. so know what you want before you order. There are some chickens, usually adult, at the local humane shelters and online adoption sites also.

Your chickens will need a safe run and house. The house is where they will sleep at night and where they will lay their eggs in the day. It needs to have a place to roost, a nest (preferably raised), good ventilation, and access for easy cleaning. The enclosure must

keep them safe from predators (dog, cats, fox, coyote, snakes, weasels) and stop them from wandering off. As with all animals, they need fresh water daily. There are different systems available for birds from the livestock supply store. For food you can supply commercial chicken pellets, scratch in the cold weather and leftovers from your kitchen. They are excellent in bug control. They will eat grasshoppers, ticks, flies, and mosquitoes and supply fertilizer for your garden if properly composted.

If you have never had chickens before you will be amazed how personable they are. Getting them young, feeding them by hand and handling them a lot will help ensure they will be friendly.

Dogs and chickens left together can be disastrous if you do not manage the situation thoughtfully. Don't be fooled when dogs want to "play" with your chickens. Stop the behavior immediately. Some breeds are more inclined to want to "hunt" and will be harder to train. Start training your dog as a puppy to accept chickens and let a mature chicken deliver a sharp peck on the puppy's nose that gets too close. Reward your puppy for good behavior with kind words and treats and NEVER leave your most trusted dog alone with your chickens.

### Fun facts about chickens

There are more chickens in the world than humans

There does not have to be a rooster (male chicken) for a hen to lay eggs

The closest living relative to the Tyrannosaurus-Rex is a chicken

Alektorophobia is the fear of chickens

Chickens need 14 - 16 hours of light to lay an egg

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There are at least 150 breeds of domestic chickens

Chickens hearts beat 280 – 315 beats per minute

An average domestic laying hen lays 255 eggs per year



**Upcoming Event: Annual Open House**  
It's time once again for our annual open house. This year it will be held on Saturday September 24. We will have games and prizes for all our friends—both the human and the animal variety! HELP and Rover Rescue will join us for a day with some adoptable pets. So come to celebrate our clients, our patients, and have some fun. We are also going to have a booth at the Chicago Pet Show at Kane County Fairgrounds on Oct. 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>, come visit us there!

We would like to start a new feature in our newsletter, Ask Dr. Cechner. Please email us your question to [3lburn@sbcglobal.net](mailto:3lburn@sbcglobal.net) and Dr. Cechner will address your question!

Do you have an idea for a newsletter? A question you'd like answered about caring for your pet? Email us at [3lburn@sbcglobal.net](mailto:3lburn@sbcglobal.net) and let us know! We are always interested in what you have to say, and what you want to know.

If you have any questions or concerns, or would like more information, visit our website at [www.elburnanimalhospital.com](http://www.elburnanimalhospital.com), or give us a call at (630) 365-9599. If you would like to opt out of receiving our newsletter, please send an email to us at [3lburn@sbcglobal.net](mailto:3lburn@sbcglobal.net).

September Special – Come to our open house on Sept. 24<sup>th</sup> and mention this ad to get a coupon for a free heartworm test for your pet (one per family)!

**COMING ATTRACTIONS!!**