

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT



1555 North 17th Avenue
Greeley, CO 80631



www.weldhealth.org



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Health Communication
(970) 400-2325; kmartinez@weldgov.com

Cat in Weld County Tests Positive for Rabies

Weld County, Colorado – A cat found near Ault has tested positive for rabies at Colorado State University’s Diagnostic Lab. Prior to testing, one person was exposed and has begun receiving rabies post-exposure Treatment. Rabies is a growing problem along the Front Range, particularly when rabid wild animals come into contact with unvaccinated pets or livestock. Outdoor cats can easily contract rabies from wild animals and then may pose a great risk to humans.

“Any mammal, including humans, is at risk for contracting rabies. The risk of human exposure to rabies increases when pets and domestic animals are not properly vaccinated,” said Mark E. Wallace, MD, MPH, Executive Director of the Weld County Health Department.

Health officials recommend all domestic animals such as cats, dogs, horses and livestock be vaccinated against rabies by a licensed veterinarian.

Rabies is an infectious disease affecting the nervous system of humans and other mammals. Infection can occur through the bite or scratch of an infected animal or if saliva from such an animal gets into the eyes, nose, mouth or an opening in the skin. Rabies is nearly always fatal if left untreated.

If a person suspects they have been exposed to rabies, they should contact their medical provider immediately. Medicine is available to prevent rabies if started before symptoms appear.

To prevent and reduce exposure to rabies:

- Do not feed, touch, or handle wild animals and be cautious of stray dogs and cats
- Have dogs, cats, horses, and livestock vaccinated regularly by a licensed veterinarian
- Do not feed wild animals or keep pet food outside, which may attract wild animals
- Do not handle unfamiliar animals, including cats and dogs, even if they appear friendly
- Keep pets indoors or, while outside, supervised on a leash
- Spay or neuter pets to reduce the number of unwanted or stray animals in the neighborhood and to reduce their tendency to roam or fight

The Humane Society of Weld County has low cost vaccination clinics on the 1st and 3rd Saturday of each month from 1:30-3:30 PM. For more, visit: <https://www.weldcountyhumane.org/veterinary-services>

For a 2018 interactive map of identified rabies in Weld County, visit:

https://www.weldgov.com/departments/health_and_environment/environmental_health/animal_related_diseases/rabies_surveillance/

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