

News Releases

DHEC News Release: Cat exposes Greenville County woman to rabies

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Nov. 6, 2013

Cat exposes Greenville County woman to rabies

COLUMBIA, S.C. - A Greenville County woman is under a physician's care after being exposed to rabies in the Fountain Inn area of the county by a cat that tested positive for the disease, the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control reported today.

"To reduce the risk of getting rabies, we recommend that people avoid wild animals acting tame and tame animals acting wild," said Sue Ferguson of DHEC's Bureau of Environmental Health Services. "About 275 South Carolinians must undergo preventive treatment for rabies every year, with most exposures coming from bites or scratches by a rabid or suspected rabid animal. Wild animals carry the disease most often, but domestic pets can contract rabies as well."

Ferguson said state law requires pet owners to have their pets regularly vaccinated against the disease. "This is the fourth cat from S.C. with rabies this year, which is why vaccination is so important," she said. "Two dogs have also been diagnosed with rabies this year."

"If you think you have been exposed to the rabies virus through a bite, scratch or the saliva of a possibly infected animal, immediately wash the affected area with plenty of soap and water," Ferguson said. "Then be sure to get medical attention and report the incident to DHEC."

There were 137 confirmed cases of animal rabies during 2012 in South Carolina. There have been 107 confirmed cases in animals statewide this year. This animal is the fifth to test positive this year from Greenville County.

For more information about rabies, see DHEC's webpage at

/Health/DiseasesandConditions/InfectiousDiseases/InsectAnimalBorne/Rabies/

<<http://www.scdhec.gov/health/diseasesandconditions/infectiousdiseases/insectanimalborne/rabies/>>, or contact your local **DHEC BEHS office** **<<http://www.scdhec.gov/homeandenvironment/dheclocations/>>**. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's rabies webpage can be found at **<http://www.cdc.gov/rabies>** **<<http://www.cdc.gov/rabies>>**.

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