



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DRIVE THRU RABIES VACCINATION CLINIC TO COINCIDE WITH WORLD RABIES DAY

Milton, FL - On Wednesday, September 28, the Santa Rosa County Health Department and Santa Rosa County Animal Control will host a drive through rabies vaccination clinic from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the health department's Milton location, 5527 Stewart Street. The event will coincide with the observance of World Rabies Day, a global rabies awareness campaign that brings together relevant partners in an effort to address rabies prevention and control.

Local veterinarians Dr. David Summerlin and Dr. Amy Harper of Ark Animal Hospital in Pace, and Dr. Natalie Dyson of St. Francis Veterinary Center in Navarre, will provide the vaccine and administer injections to dogs and cats for a fee of \$10. No other services will be available at the clinic. A certificate of vaccination and rabies tag will be provided.

"We are happy to have this opportunity to partner with Santa Rosa Animal Control and our local veterinarians to provide this service to the community," said Sandra Park-O'Hara, administrator of the Santa Rosa County Health Department. "Vaccination not only protects the pet against rabies, it protects the family from possible exposure as well."

Rabies is a disease that affects the brain. The virus is carried in the saliva of infected animals and is usually transmitted to people and other animals through a bite or scratch. In the U.S., more than 90 percent of rabies cases occur in wild animals, such as raccoons, foxes, skunks and bats, but domesticated animals can carry it as well. Rabies is fatal to humans and animals, but rabies in humans can be prevented if rabies vaccine is administered as soon as possible after exposure.

Treating individuals that have been exposed to rabies can be expensive, and insurance does not always cover the cost. Last year the Santa Rosa County Health Department gave post exposure rabies shots to 22 people, at a total cost of \$26,000.

The health department advises residents to take precautions to avoid exposing themselves or their pets to rabies:

- Avoid all contact with wild and unfamiliar domesticated animals.
- Do not place feeders in the yard – the food will attract unwanted animals such as raccoons and foxes.
- Vaccinate pets against rabies and keep their shots up-to-date.
- Do not leave pets outside unsupervised.
- Bring in pet food at night and secure trash cans with fasteners.
- Cover bird feeders. Most squirrel-proof coverings also deter wild animals.
- Children should never chase or attempt to catch or touch a wild or unfamiliar animal, and should tell an adult if a wild or strange animal tries to approach them.
- If bitten by a wild or strange animal, wash the wound with soap and water, seek immediate medical care, and report the bite to the Santa Rosa Animal Services

at 850-983-4680, or Santa Rosa County Health Department, Environmental Health at 850-983-5275.

Report an animal behaving strangely to Santa Rosa Animal Services at 850-983-4680. Report a dead wild animal to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's regional office at 850-265-3676, or call their 24-hour law enforcement hotline at 888-404-3922.

For more information about the Drive Thru Rabies Clinic, contact Santa Rosa County Health Department Epidemiologist Mary Beverly at 850-983-5200, ext. 105. For more information about World Rabies Day, visit www.cdc.gov/rabies.

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