



► Fostering is an ideal activity for people that love animals but cannot commit to having a lifelong pet in China.



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JAR's

Rabies in Cats

What Is Rabies?

Rabies is a viral disease that affects the brain and spinal cord of all mammals, including cats, dogs and humans. This preventable disease annually causes the deaths of more than 50,000 humans and millions of animals worldwide. There's good reason that the very word "rabies" evokes fear in people - once symptoms appear, rabies is close to 100% fatal.

How Would My Cat Get Rabies?

There are several reported routes of transmission of the rabies virus. Rabies is most often transmitted through a bite from an infected animal. Less frequently, it can be passed on when the saliva of an infected animal enters another animal's body through mucous membranes or an open, fresh wound.

The risk for contracting rabies runs highest if your cat is exposed to wild animals. Outbreaks can occur in populations of wild animals (most often raccoons, bats, skunks and foxes in this country) or in areas where there are significant numbers of unvaccinated, free-roaming dogs and cats. In the United States, rabies is reported in cats more than in any domestic species.

What Are the General Symptoms of Rabies?

Animals will not show signs immediately following exposure to a rabid animal. Symptoms can be varied and can take months to develop. Classic signs of rabies in cats are changes in behavior (including aggression, restlessness and lethargy), increased vocalization, loss of appetite, weakness, disorientation, paralysis, seizures and even sudden death.

Which Cats Are Most at Risk For Getting Rabies?

Unvaccinated cats who are allowed to roam outdoors are at the highest risk for rabies infection. Outdoor cats may, in the course of daily life, get into a fight with an infected wild animal or an infected stray dog or cat. And although widespread vaccination programs have helped to control rabies in dogs, feral cat populations remain a reservoir host for the rabies virus.

How Is Rabies Diagnosed?

There is no accurate test to diagnose rabies in live animals. The direct fluorescent antibody test is the most accurate test for diagnosis, but it can only be performed after the death of the animal. The rabies virus can incubate in a cat's body anywhere from just one week to more than a year before becoming active. When the virus does become active, symptoms appear quickly.

How Is Rabies Treated?

There is no treatment or cure for rabies once symptoms appear. The disease results in fatality.

How Can Rabies Be Prevented?

Vaccination is the key! Vaccinating your cat doesn't just protect him from rabies - it also protects your cat if he bites someone. Besides, the vaccine should definitely be administered if your cat spends any time outdoors (JAR recommends keeping pet cats indoors).



Jaiya's Animal Rescue

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What Should I Do If I Think My Cat Has Had Contact with a Rabid Animal?

Put on some gloves to protect yourself from infection, and call your veterinarian for an immediate appointment! You'll also need to contact local animal control officers if the animal who bit your pet is still at large; they will be best able to safely apprehend and remove the animal from the environment.

A cat who is up to date with his vaccinations and who has been bitten by a possibly rabid animal should also be given a rabies booster vaccine immediately and kept under observation for 45 days.

What Should I Do If I Think I've Been Bitten by a Rabid Animal?

See your doctor immediately! You may need to get a series of injections.

Note: Do not attempt to handle or capture a wild animal who is acting strangely (i.e., a nocturnal animal who is out during the day, an animal who acts unusually tame). Report the animal to local animal control officers as soon as possible.



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