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## Region health department confirms first case of raccoon rabies



The Halton Region Health Department received test results from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency last week, confirming a case of rabies in a raccoon found in Burlington.

The Health Department is reminding residents to avoid all contact with raccoons and other wild animals.

Rabies is a viral disease that causes severe damage to the brain and spinal cord, and if untreated before symptoms appear will lead to death. The virus is spread through the saliva of an infected animal, usually entering through a bite or scratch.

Anyone who comes in physical contact with a raccoon or other wild animal should see a physician immediately and contact the Health Department by dialing 311, said Dr. Hamidah Meghani, Medical Officer of Health for Halton Region.

After someone is exposed to rabies, timely use of the rabies vaccine can prevent the rabies illness. The rabies vaccine is extremely effective if it is administered before any symptoms occur.

There are a number of things you can do to protect your family and pets:

- Make sure your pet's rabies vaccinations are up to date.
- Warn your children to stay away from any wild, stray or aggressive animals.
- Do not touch dead or sick animals.
- Do not feed or keep wild animals as pets.
- Keep your pet on a leash when off your property.
- Seek medical attention immediately if you come in contact with a raccoon or other potentially rabid animals.
- Any pet that has come in contact with a raccoon or other wild animal should be seen by a veterinarian.

Report all animal bites or scratches to the Halton Region Health Department.

For more information on rabies, call the Halton Region Health Department by dialing 311 or visit [halton.ca/rabies](http://halton.ca/rabies)

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