



CHCHD News

Chattanooga-Hamilton County Health Department

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For Immediate Release
April 18, 2011

Be a Responsible Pet Owner: Vaccinate Your Pet!

Chattanooga, TN- The Chattanooga-Hamilton County Health Department urges pet owners to take their unvaccinated pets to one of several low-cost rabies vaccination clinics starting Friday, April 22. The Chattanooga-Hamilton County Health Department, along with the Humane Society and the Hamilton County Veterinary Medical Association, will offer rabies vaccinations for \$12 at the special clinics.

"It is heartbreaking to see unvaccinated pets euthanized due to exposure to rabid animals, especially because it is entirely preventable if the vaccination is given before exposure," said Bonnie Deakins, director of environmental health services at the Chattanooga-Hamilton County Health Department. "Pet owners can take their dogs and cats to a veterinarian for rabies shots, or visit the special low-cost clinics," Deakins said.

Rabies vaccinations are required by law for all dogs and cats. "Typically only about 50 percent of the dogs and 20 percent of the cats in Hamilton County are vaccinated against rabies each year. To protect pets and humans from rabies, more dogs and cats in Hamilton County should be vaccinated," said Deakins.

Last year, 65,959 dogs and cats were vaccinated in Hamilton County. Rabies vaccinations can help prevent the spread of rabies by raccoons and other mammals. Raccoon rabies is particularly dangerous because it spreads rapidly between raccoons; because rabid raccoons tend to be fast and aggressive, this raises the potential for spreading rabies to domestic pets and other wildlife.

Rabies is caused by a virus that affects the nervous system of humans and other mammals. The usual mode of rabies transmission is by the introduction of saliva containing rabies virus into a bite wound. Any mammal, such as raccoons, skunks, foxes, bats, dogs, and cats, can get rabies. Cattle and humans can also get rabies. In 2008, the Health Department investigated 3 cases of animal rabies.

(more)

The special rabies clinics will be held from 4 p.m.-6 p.m. on the following days:

- Friday, April 22
- Saturday, April 23
- Wednesday, April 27
- Thursday, April 28th (special cat clinics)
- Friday, April 29
- Saturday, April 30

For a list of clinic locations click [here](#) or call the Chattanooga-Hamilton County Health Department at (423) 209-8110. The list can also be found on our website at <http://health.hamiltontn.org/>.

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