

COUNTY OF MONTGOMERY

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MONTGOMERY COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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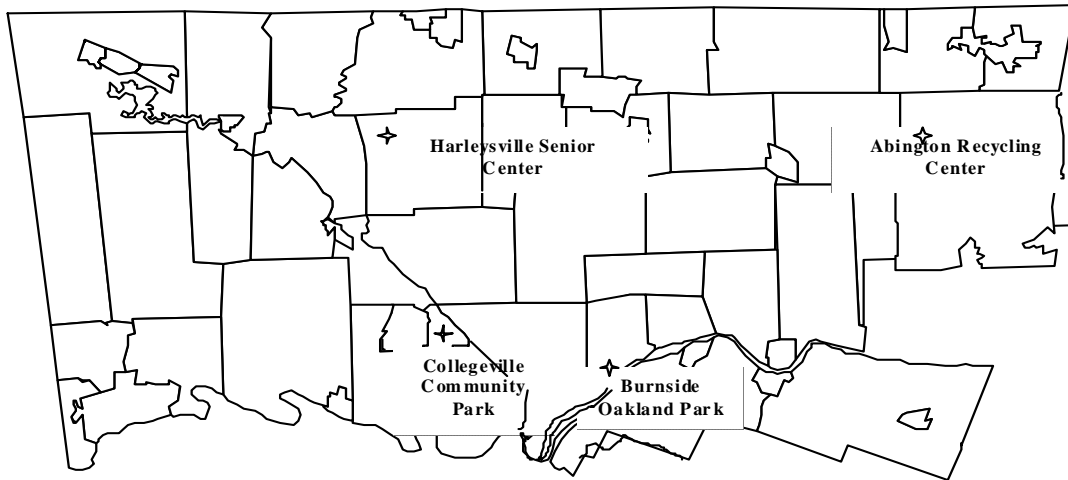
www.health.montcopa.org

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For Immediate Release:

Montgomery County Health Department Announces Rabies Clinic Dates

May 15, 2009 (Norristown, PA) The Montgomery County Health Department will be conducting our annual **Low Cost Rabies Immunization Clinics** every Saturday in June for the Eighteenth consecutive year. As in previous years, these clinics are located throughout the county in order to ensure that resident pet owners have access to this disease prevention service.



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NORRISTOWN HEALTH CENTER

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POTTSTOWN HEALTH CENTER

364 King Street

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Phone: (610) 970-5040 Fax: (610) 970-5048

EASTERN COURT HOUSE ANNEX

102 York Road, Suite 401

Willow Grove, PA 19090

Phone: (215) 784-5415 Fax: (215) 784-5524

RABIES CLINIC LOCATIONS

- The 2008 Annual Rabies Clinic locations, dates and times are:

LOCATION	DATE	TIME
Abington Recycling Center Florey Lane (off of Easton Rd.) Abington	June 6	9 AM – 11 AM
Collegeville Community Park 4th and Park Ave Collegeville	June 13	9 AM – 11 AM
Harleysville Senior Ctr. on Alumni Ave. (off of Main St) Harleysville	June 20	9 AM – 11 AM
Burnside Oakland Park Burnside Ave. and Oakland Drive. West Norriton	June 27	9 AM – 11 AM

- **WHEN ARRIVING AT THE CLINIC, PLEASE REMEMBER THAT ALL ANIMALS MUST BE LEASHED OR IN AN APPROVED CARRIER.**
- **THE VACCINATION COST IS \$10.00 PER SHOT.**
- **In 2008, 1,183 cats and dogs and ferrets were vaccinated at five Rabies Clinic Sites in Montgomery County:**

CLINIC SITE	2008
Abington	249
Collegeville	171
Harleysville	231
West Norriton	347
Pottstown	183
Total	1,183

- **For more information about MCHD's Animal Bite and Rabies Surveillance Program, please contact the Division of Communicable Disease Control and Prevention, at (610) 278-5117.**

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The Montgomery County Health Department (MCHD) would like to take this opportunity to discuss rabies and rabies vaccination. With the warm weather upon us, more residents will be outside with their pets walking or hiking on trails and in parks. These activities could place county residents at a higher risk of exposure to wild animals and/or stray domestic animals.

What is Rabies?

Rabies is a viral disease that affects the central nervous system. It can affect all mammals, including man. Rabies is a fatal disease once symptoms appear.

How is Rabies Spread?

Rabies is spread most often through the bite of a rabid animal. It can also be spread through a scratch from a rabid animal that breaks the skin or through exposure of an open wound or mucous membrane (eye, nose or mouth) to saliva from a rabid animal. In Montgomery County rabies has been found in raccoons, bats, skunks, foxes, cats, and dogs.

All cats and dogs three months of age and older must be vaccinated against rabies. Pennsylvania State Law and the Montgomery County Public Health Code require this.

Vaccinating domestic animals is an important way to prevent rabies transmission from wildlife animal reservoirs to the human population.

Many Montgomery County residents are not vaccinating their cats or dogs.

When reviewing the 1,408 animal bites in Montgomery County reported to the Health Department in 2008, 1,018 are animal to human and 390 are animal to animal; 62% of cats and 38% of dogs involved in biting incidents were **not vaccinated** against rabies. The proportion of unvaccinated cats and dogs has remained consistent over the last five years. The average of approximately 70% of cats and 30% of dogs involved in biting incidents were **not vaccinated** against rabies in the last five years. We do not know what the vaccination status of cats and dogs that are not reported to MCHD.

A dog or cat that is not current on its rabies vaccinations and has a wound of unknown origin must be quarantined at a veterinary hospital for six (6) months at the owner's expense or it must be euthanized and tested for rabies.

In 2008, 133 pets were exposed to suspected rabid animals and were quarantined.

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Animal rabies remains a problem. The number of animal rabies cases reported to the Health Department since 1996 are as follows:

YEAR	ANIMAL RABIES CASES INVOLVING HUMAN OR DOMESTIC ANIMAL	
1996	5	(4 raccoons; 1 bat)
1997	12	(7 raccoons; 1 skunk; 4 cats)
1998	10	(6 raccoons; 1 skunk; 2 bats; 1 cat)
1999	7	(1 raccoons; 2 skunk; 3 bats; 1 cats)
2000	14	(6 raccoons; 2 skunks; 2 bats; 1 cat; 1 dog; 1 groundhog; 1 fox)
2001	21	(8 raccoons; 7 skunks; 2 bats; 2 cats; 1 groundhog; 1 beaver)
2002	18	(9 raccoons; 6 skunks; 2 bats; 1 groundhog)
2003	8	(7 raccoons; 1 bat)
2004	19	(12 raccoons; 3 skunks; 2 bats; 2 cats)
2005	17	(8 raccoons; 5 skunks; 2 bats; 2 cats)
2006	10	(7 raccoons; 2 cats, 1 bat)
2007	11	(4 bats, 3 skunks, 2 raccoons, 1 groundhog, 1 steer)
2008	21	(8 skunks, 6 raccoons, 5 bats, 2 cats)

- **Currently in 2009, Montgomery County rabies cases reported to date are as follows:**
Six positive animal rabies cases in Montgomery County this year: **5 Raccoons;** Lower Providence Township (1), Upper Hanover Township (1), Lower Gwynedd Township (1) Lower Pottsgrove Township (1), and Limerick Township (1); **1 Skunk;** Upper Gwynedd Township (1).
- **The recommended precautions to prevent animal bites and possible rabies risk are:**
 - Do not feed, befriend, handle, or try to make pets of wild animals or stray domestic animals.
 - Vaccinate domestic dogs, cats and selected livestock according to your veterinarian's recommendations.
 - Obey animal control ordinances, particularly not allowing domestic animals to run at large.
 - If bitten by a wild or domestic animal, immediately wash the wound thoroughly with soap and water and seek medical attention from your doctor or hospital emergency room.
 - After receiving appropriate medical care, contact the Health Department we can investigate whether post-exposure rabies injections are required and provide the appropriate recommendation to the physician.

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