

# Why Does My Dog Need a Rabies Vaccine?

## What Is Rabies?

Rabies is a preventable, contagious, and potentially fatal disease that causes brain and spine inflammation. Since most states require rabies vaccinations for domestic pets, rabies is most typically seen in wildlife.



## Common Wildlife That Can Have Rabies Includes:

- Raccoons
- Skunks
- Foxes
- Coyotes
- Bats

If your dog has rabies, it can be transmitted to other pets and people through bite wounds.

If an unvaccinated dog who is past due for their rabies vaccine is exposed to a potentially rabid animal and accidentally bites someone or another pet, it can result in the dog being quarantined and most often humanely euthanized. In most cases, dogs do not survive rabies.

**Always keep your dog away from wildlife to prevent the possible spread of rabies.**

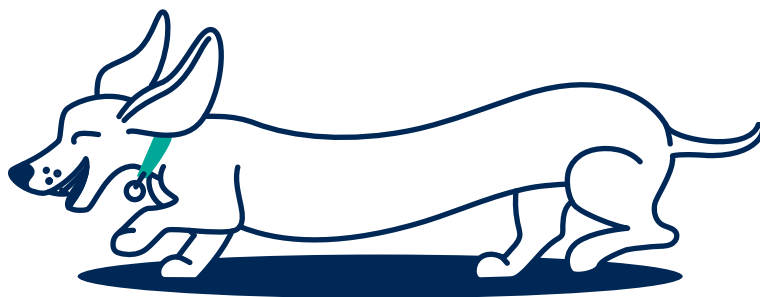
## When Do Symptoms Appear?

If your pet is infected with the rabies virus, the symptoms will not appear right away.

The average incubation period is three to eight weeks, but it can range from 10 days to a year.

The rate at which symptoms appear is entirely dependent on the site of infection.

A bite that is closer to the spine or brain develops much faster than others, and the severity of the bite also plays a role. Bite wounds are not always obvious, especially from animals like bats.



## The Most Common Signs of a Bite From a Rabid Animal Include:

- Fever
- Lethargy
- Loss of appetite
- Weakness/paralysis of the legs
- Seizures
- Difficulty breathing
- Excess drooling
- Depression/coma



## What Is the Rabies Vaccine for Dogs? When Do Dogs Get It?

The rabies vaccine for dogs is a core vaccine that pets get every one to three years, starting at 12 weeks old.

This vaccine is the safest and most effective way to protect your pup from rabies, which can be fatal to both animals and humans.

The rabies vaccine is safe, and side effects are minimal and short-lived—typically lethargy and tenderness at the injection site.

The timeframe of vaccine renewals may depend on state laws and your pet's health. Consult your veterinarian for more information and regional requirements.

## Does My Dog Need the Rabies Vaccine?

The rabies vaccine for dogs is required by law in several parts of the United States.

Due to the fatality and zoonosis (meaning it can be transmitted from animals to people) associated with rabies, there may be legal ramifications if your pet is not current on their rabies vaccine.

Therefore, it's extremely important to keep your pet up to date.

If your dog is vaccinated and encounters a rabid animal, contact your veterinarian. They will likely need a booster shot.

## Benefits of the Rabies Vaccine for Dogs

The rabies vaccine stops the spread of rabies among dogs and prevents your dog from becoming sick if they accidentally encounter infected wildlife.

When you get your dog vaccinated against rabies, you are not only protecting them—you are also protecting yourself, your family, and your community.