

LAKE  
COUNTY



*Guiding Your Health*

**GENERAL  
HEALTH  
DISTRICT**

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*Joel F. Lucia, R.S., M.P.H.  
Health Commissioner*

May 12, 2009

### Raccoon Rabies Vaccination Baiting Slated for May 12 to 29

The Lake County General Health District will be participating in the spring oral rabies vaccination operation to immunize raccoons. Baits containing vaccine will be distributed by vehicle and on foot in raccoon habitat. The vaccine is contained in a plastic packet covered with a brown 2x2 inch fishmeal block. Residents should avoid touching the baits and contact the Health District at (440) 350-2543 if they do so. Dogs are attracted to the odor of the bait and although it is not harmful to them, they should be prevented from eating it so it is available for the raccoons. Do not risk being bitten.

The following communities will receive vaccine application this spring:

Eastlake, Fairport Harbor, Grand River, Kirtland, Kirtland Hills, Lakeline, Madison Village, Mentor, Mentor-on-the Lake, North Perry, Painesville, Perry Village, Timberlake, Waite Hill, Wickliffe, Willoughby, Willoughby Hills, and Willowick

Due to state budget cuts, the communities that were traditionally baited by airplane will not receive a bait application this spring:

Concord Township, Leroy Township, Madison Township, Painesville Township, and Perry Township

Rabies is a viral disease that affects animals and people. The variant of rabies associated with raccoons is of particular public health concern because it can affect other wild animals and pets. The virus is found in the saliva of affected animals, most often raccoons, skunks, and bats, and is spread by a bite or scratch. Avoiding contact with wildlife and routine vaccination of pets for rabies is the best protection against this deadly virus.

Please note: All communities are projected to receive bait application in late August or early September.

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# **Ohio Department of Health**

## **Oral Rabies Vaccination Program – May 2009**

**Background** Rabies is a viral disease that affects animals and people and is still virtually 100 percent fatal. Raccoon-rabies variant (RRV) is of particular public health concern because it can infect domestic animals and people. Ohio's effort to keep raccoon rabies from spreading throughout Ohio began in 1997. A new vaccine that could be eaten by wild animals was used to create a barrier of immunized raccoons along Ohio's borders with Pennsylvania and West Virginia. This strategy was very successful and in subsequent years many other states including Pennsylvania and West Virginia also began programs. This multistate effort, coordinated by the United States Department of Agriculture's Wildlife Services, is called the Oral Rabies Vaccination Program. Other partners in Ohio are the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, The Ohio State University College of Veterinary Medicine and local health departments (LHDs).

In July 2004, RRV-infected raccoons were discovered west of the immune barrier in Lake, Geauga and Cuyahoga counties. The Oral rabies vaccine (ORV) project was then expanded and now vaccine-laden baits are now being distributed both spring and fall in this area to eliminate RRV.

**Procedures** ORV baits will be distributed in five Ohio counties to prevent further spread of RRV. Baits will be dispersed across all of Lake County; in western Geauga County; east of I-77 in Cuyahoga County; northwest of I-80 in Portage County; and the northern half of Summit County. Baits will be delivered by helicopter in rural and urban areas. They will fly low and slow along north-south flight lines that are about 0.5 miles apart. LHDs will coordinate ground teams and will use vehicles to distribute baits in urban and suburban areas.

**Start Date** Baiting will begin May 12. Helicopter baiting should take two to three days, weather permitting. Vehicle and ground distribution of ORV baits in urban and suburban neighborhoods is expected to take about 17 days, from May 12 to May 29, but may be extended a day or more depending on the weather. The base of operations is Lake County Engineers Complex in Painesville, Ohio.

**Bait and Distribution** In areas where baits will be distributed from vehicles or helicopter, the vaccine sachet will be inside a brown 2-x-2-inch fishmeal block. There will be a total of 135,000 pieces of bait distributed over roughly 695 square miles.

**For more information call 1-888-722-4371  
or visit the ODH Zoonotic Disease Program Web site at:**

**<http://www.odh.ohio.gov/odhPrograms/dis/zoonoses/rabies/orv/orv1.aspx>**