



Public Health
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Frederick County Health Department

News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

JANUARY 13, 2026

Groundhog from near the intersection of West Patrick Street and McCain Drive in Frederick City Tests Positive for Rabies

FREDERICK, MD – On Tuesday, January 13, 2026, the Frederick County Health Department (FCHD) was notified that a groundhog picked up from near the intersection of West Patrick Street and McCain Drive in Frederick, Maryland, tested positive for the rabies virus. On Friday, January 9, 2026, at about 8:50 p.m. a community member thought the groundhog had been hit by a car and moved it out of the roadway. Frederick County Animal Control was contacted that evening and picked up the groundhog.

People who may have had contact with this groundhog should consult their health care provider and notify the FCHD's Community Health Services Office at 301-600-3342. The FCHD reminds residents that wildlife can live in residential areas and recommends avoiding interaction or feeding wild animals.

If a pet had contact with a wild animal, consult with your veterinarian and notify the FCHD's Environmental Health Office at 301-600-1717.

Rabies is a viral disease that mainly infects mammals and is spread through the saliva of the infected animal, usually by a bite. Symptoms of rabies in animals may include fear of water, excessive salivation, failure to eat or drink, limping, unusually friendly or aggressive behavior, and/or other atypical behaviors such as nocturnal animals emerging during the daytime. The disease is nearly always fatal to humans if infected and no prompt post-exposure treatment is had.

Barry Glotfelty, Director for FCHD's Environmental Health Services, advises, "Mammals can be infected with the rabies virus, so do not touch or play with unknown animals. Also, make sure your pets are vaccinated."

If you or your pets have contact with a stray or wild animal, report it to Animal Control at 301-600-1544. For more information on rabies, visit Health.FrederickCountyMD.gov/Rabies.

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