

**ANDREW J. SPANO, Westchester County Executive**  
**JOSHUA LIPSMAN, M.D., M.P.H., Commissioner of Health**  
**SUSAN TOLCHIN, Director of Communications**

**CONTACT: SUSAN TOLCHIN**  
**MARY LANDRIGAN**

**(914) 285-2932**  
**(914) 637-4715**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Rabid Fox Found in Hartsdale**

The Westchester County Department of Health today issued a Rabies Alert to residents of Hartsdale who may have had contact with a rabid fox. On February 20, 2001, a fox in the Woodlands High School/High Point Drive vicinity of Hartsdale was captured and has tested positive for rabies. The Greenburgh Police Department captured the fox in response to a call regarding a woman attacked by the fox.

"Anyone who believes that he or she may have had contact with this fox, or that a pet may have, should call the Westchester County Department of Health immediately at 637-4700 to assess the need for life-saving rabies treatment," stated Joshua Lipsman, M.D., M.P.H., Westchester County Commissioner of Health.

Dr. Lipsman warns that anyone bitten by a rabid animal or having contact with its saliva may need to receive immediate post-exposure rabies treatment. "When administered early enough, before symptoms develop, the treatment is 100% effective," he said. "However, once symptoms occur, in humans or animals, the disease is fatal", he added.

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"It is imperative for pet owners to immunize their animals against rabies and to ensure that these vaccinations are kept up to date," said Dr. Lipsman. "Previously vaccinated domestic animals such as dogs, cats, and ferrets, that have experienced contact with this fox require a booster vaccination within five days of exposure. Such incidents must be immediately reported to the health department," he continued. If residents have questions, they should call us at (914) 637-4700.

A change in an animal's behavior is the first sign of rabies. A rabid animal may become either abnormally aggressive or unusually tame. It may lose fear of people and become excited and irritable, or, conversely appear particularly friendly and affectionate. Staggering, spitting, and frothing at the mouth are sometimes noted. Adults should encourage children to immediately tell an adult if they have been bitten by an animal and to refrain from touching unfamiliar animals.

All animal bites or contacts with animals suspected of having rabies must be reported to the Westchester County Department of Health at (914) 637-4700, 24 hours a day. For more information about rabies and its prevention, residents can also call the RABIES HOTLINE at (914) 637-4718 or visit the Health Department's Website at [www.westchestergov.com/health](http://www.westchestergov.com/health).

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