

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

**CONTACT: CAREN HALBFINGER**

**(914) 813-5013**

**(914) 813-5000 (After Hours)**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**July 1, 2008**

**RABIES ALERT  
Rabid Cat Found in Peekskill**

The Westchester County Department of Health is issuing a Rabies Alert to residents who may have had contact with a rabid cat in the vicinity of Orchard Street in Peekskill.

The cat, a white male with tan markings on its body and tan stripes on its tail, was a stray that was found and tested for rabies on June 27 by a Peekskill Animal Control Officer. Test results received today confirm that the cat was rabid.

"Anyone who believes that he or she, or a pet, may have had contact with this cat should contact the Westchester County Department of Health immediately at (914) 813-5000 to assess the need for life saving rabies treatment," said Westchester County Commissioner of Health, Dr. Joshua Lipsman. "Anyone bitten by a rabid animal, or having contact with its saliva, may need to receive immediate rabies vaccination," he said.

When administered early enough and before symptoms develop, rabies treatment is 100 percent effective. Once symptoms occur, in humans or animals, the disease is fatal.

Unusual behavior may be the first sign of rabies in an animal. 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 passive and lethargic. Staggering and frothing at the mouth are sometimes noted.

Direct contact with wild or stray animals, even baby animals, is always inadvisable. Parents should instruct children to refrain from touching unfamiliar animals and to immediately tell an adult if they have been bitten or scratched by an animal. Any physical contact with a wild or unfamiliar animal should be

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reported to a health care provider. All animal bites or contacts with animals suspected of having rabies must be reported to the Westchester County Department of Health at (914) 813-5000, 24 hours a day.

Keeping pet rabies vaccinations up to date is critical for protection against rabies. New York State law requires dogs, cats, and ferrets to be vaccinated against rabies and receive regular booster shots.

For more information about rabies and its prevention, residents can also call the RABIES INFOLINE at (914) 813-5010 or visit the Health Department's Website at [www.westchestergov.com/health](http://www.westchestergov.com/health).