

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) has confirmed a positive rabies case in southwest Nebraska. The case involved an aggressive skunk with no human contact, according to Tami Herskowitz, surveillance coordinator at Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department.

“We were very pleased that the individuals involved were very cautious and had the skunk tested for rabies,” she said.

Rabies is an infectious viral disease that affects the nervous system of humans and other mammals. People get rabies from the bite of an animal with rabies. Any wild mammal, like a raccoon, skunk, fox, coyote or bat can have rabies and transmit it to people.

According to the Center for Disease Control, rabies is a medical urgency. Any wounds should be immediately washed and receive medical attention from a health care professional.

“We can’t stress enough the importance of vaccinating your pets against rabies,” explains Herskowitz.

“The majority of rabies incidents occur in wildlife instead of domestic animals. This is due to the increase in pet vaccination, which we highly recommend.”

Animals with rabies may act differently from healthy animals. Wild animals may move slowly or may act as if they are tame. A pet that is usually friendly may snap at you or may try to bite.

Some signs of rabies in animals are:

- Changes in an animal’s behavior
- General sickness
- Problems swallowing
- Increased drooling
- Aggression