



## Buncombe County Health and Human Services

Public Health ~ Adult & Children's Protective Services ~ Economic Services & Work Strategies  
Parks, Greenways & Recreation ~ Human Resources, Services Support & Finance

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For more information call:  
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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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#### **Fox Tested Rabid in Biltmore Square Mall Area**

Buncombe County Department of Health officials have confirmed that a fox found near the Biltmore Square Mall has tested positive for rabies. Rabies is easily transmitted among wild animals and unvaccinated pets, and it's possible that the fox may have been in contact with other animals before being captured. Anyone in the Biltmore Square Mall area should be alert for any animal that may be behaving strangely such as acting aggressively, stumbling or foaming at the mouth. If such an animal is seen, take children and pets inside and call the Buncombe County Sheriff's office at 250-6670.

Rabies is not unusual among wildlife; however it's important that steps be taken to prevent exposure to the disease among humans and pets. In North Carolina rabies is most common in raccoons, skunks, foxes and bats but has also been found in dogs, cats, horses, cattle and other animals.

The Buncombe County Department of Health makes the following recommendations to prevent the spread of rabies:

- **Keep rabies vaccinations up-to-date for all cats, ferrets, and dogs.**
- **Stay away from wild animals and any animal you don't know.** Keep children and pets away from these animals. Don't try to feed, touch, or play with a wild animal.
- Don't allow pets to run at large.
- Secure garbage in containers with tight-fitting lids, and take them out in the morning of pick up, not the night before. Coyotes and other wildlife will scavenge trash.
- Feed pets indoors or remove food when your pet is finished eating outside. Wild animals are attracted to pet food left outdoors.

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HHS Administration  
p. 828.250.5700  
f. 828.250.6235  
PO Box 7408  
Asheville, NC  
28802

Social Services  
p. 828.250.5500  
f. 828.250.6235  
PO Box 7408  
Asheville, NC  
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Public Health  
p. 828.250.5000  
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PO Box 7407  
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Parks, Greenways & Recreation  
p. 828.250.4260  
f. 828.250.6715  
59 Woodfin Place  
Asheville, NC 28801

[buncombecounty.org](http://buncombecounty.org)

- Avoid contact with bats. If you find a bat during daylight hours, it is most likely unhealthy and should not be touched.
- Keep bird-feeder areas clean, and use bird feeders that keep seed off the ground. Foxes are attracted to small animals congregating on the ground. If you see foxes often, remove all feeders.
- Close off crawl spaces under sheds, porches, decks and homes. Some wildlife may use these spaces to rest or to build their dens.

Rabies is a disease caused by a virus that is spread through the saliva of an infected animal. When contracted by humans, rabies is fatal unless early treatment is sought. There is no cure once symptoms develop, so immediate treatment is important to prevent the disease.

### Take Action If You Are Bitten

If you or someone in your family is exposed to a rabid animal, rabies can be prevented through a series of shots called rabies post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP).

If you are bitten by any animal, follow these steps.

1. Immediately wash the wound well with soap and water and see a healthcare provider or go to the Emergency Department of your local hospital.
2. **Contact Animal Control if you or your pet is bitten, to assist in capturing the animal for observation or rabies testing.** If the animal is caught and tested and does not have rabies, you may not need to have post-exposure shots and your pet may not need to be quarantined.

Animal Control phone numbers:

- Asheville City limits - Asheville Police 252-1110
- Buncombe County, Black Mountain – Buncombe County Sheriff’s Office 250-6670

For rabies issues in the municipalities below, call Marc Fowler, Buncombe County Department of Health 250-5036.

- Biltmore Forest
- Montreat
- Weaverville
- Woodfin

- more -

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HHS Administration p. 828.250.5700 f. 828.250.6235 PO Box 7408 Asheville, NC 28802	Social Services p. 828.250.5500 f. 828.250.6235 PO Box 7408 Asheville, NC 28802	Public Health p. 828.250.5000 f. 828.250.6235 PO Box 7407 Asheville, NC 28802	Parks, Greenways & Recreation p. 828.250.4260 f. 828.250.6715 59 Woodfin Place Asheville, NC 28801
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3. **For questions regarding rabies exposures contact your local health department.** A trained disease control nurse can talk about your exposure with you and help you decide if rabies vaccines are needed.

- Buncombe County Department of Health - Communicable Disease program 250-5109

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