



Health and Human Services **MEDIA RELEASE**



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 26, 2016

Florida Department of Health in Sarasota County (DOH-Sarasota) issues Rabies Alert for the Myakka Valley Subdivision

SARASOTA COUNTY— The Florida Department of Health in Sarasota County (DOH-Sarasota) received laboratory confirmation on Monday, May 23, 2016 of rabies in a deer. Health officials say the fawn was found by a property owner in the Myakka Valley Ranches Subdivision on Monday, May 16, 2016.

A local veterinarian who lives in the area considered that this low-risk animal could be rabid. She recalled that Sarasota County had two low-risk goats test positive for rabies last spring. There was no obvious injury to the fawn. However, the animal was showing signs of illness including twitching in the face, poor muscular coordination, salivating and had no apparent fear of humans.

The deer was euthanized and tested positive for rabies. At this point, authorities are not sure how the deer contracted rabies. DOH-Sarasota has issued a **rabies alert** for 60-days in the **Myakka Valley Ranches Subdivision**.

All residents, especially in this vicinity, should be aware that rabies is present in the wild animal population and domestic animals are at risk if not vaccinated. The public is asked to maintain a heightened awareness that rabies is active in Sarasota County. Alerts are designed to increase awareness to the public, but they should not give a false sense of security to areas that have not been named as under an alert.

Rabies is caused by a virus, which humans and other mammals can get through an animal bite. In Florida, rabies is usually associated with bites or scratches from raccoons, bats, foxes, and unvaccinated outside cats. The virus can spread through contact with saliva or nervous tissue of a rabid animal through an open wound, the mouth, nose or eyes. Rabies is nearly always fatal without proper medical treatment. The only treatment for human exposure to rabies is rabies specific immune globulin and rabies immunization which should be started soon after the exposure to protect an exposed person from the disease.

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MEDIA NOTES:

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Keep pets under direct supervision. If your pet is bitten by a wild animal, seek veterinary assistance for the animal immediately and contact Sarasota County Sheriff's Office Animal Services at 941-861-9500. Contact Animal Services to report unusual acting animals and to remove stray animals from your neighborhood.

Hunters should harvest only healthy appearing game, wear rubber or latex gloves when dressing carcasses, and wash hands afterwards. If a domestic or wild animal bites or scratches you, seek care promptly. Wash the wound thoroughly with soap and running water for five to ten minutes. Immediately visit your primary doctor, hospital or county health department for medical attention. Report an animal bite to DOH-Sarasota at 941-861-6133.

For more information on rabies, go to the Florida Department of Health website at <http://www.floridahealth.gov/diseases-and-conditions/rabies/index.html> or call the Department of Health in Sarasota County Environmental Health office at 941-861-6133 or Sarasota County Sheriff's Office Animal Services at 941-861-9500.

About the Florida Department of Health

The department, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts. Follow us on Twitter at [@HealthyFla](#) and on [Facebook](#). For more information about the Florida Department of Health please visit www.FloridaHealth.gov.

-30-

Sarasota County prohibits discrimination in all services, programs or activities.
View the complete policy at www.scgov.net/ADA/Pages/default.aspx

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