

# What is the Oral Rabies Vaccination Project?

The Oral Rabies Vaccination Project for raccoons is like any immunization program. Just as children are vaccinated against measles or mumps, raccoons can be vaccinated against rabies.

## ► Who is conducting the ORV Project?

The ORV Project is a cooperative effort between your local health department, the West Virginia Bureau for Public Health, the West Virginia Department of Agriculture, the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources (DNR), the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Ohio Department of Health, the New York State Department of Health, and many other state and local organizations.

## ► How is a raccoon vaccinated?

A raccoon is vaccinated by eating a bait containing the vaccine. Baits are dropped in areas where raccoons are likely to find them.

## ► Where will the baits be dropped?

The baits will be dropped along a wide corridor through the central part of the state, extending from the northern panhandle to the southern coalfields. Involved counties include Barbour, Boone, Braxton, Brooke, Calhoun, Clay, Doddridge, Fayette, Gilmer, Grant, Hancock, Harrison, Kanawha, Lewis, Logan, Marshall, Marion, McDowell, Mingo, Monongalia, Nicholas, Ohio, Pleasants, Preston, Raleigh, Randolph, Ritchie, Roane, Taylor, Tucker, Tyler, Upshur, Webster, Wetzel, and Wyoming.

## ► When will the baits be dropped?

The bait drop will take place in August-September 2003.

## ► How can I help with the ORV Program?

You can help by being aware of what the baits look like and encouraging children to leave them alone. Pet owners can help by keeping all dogs and cats inside or on a leash so the baits can be eaten by rac-

# Rabies: 6 Easy Ways to Protect Yourself and Your Family

- Do not feed, touch, or adopt wild animals, and be cautious of stray dogs and cats. Rabid animals do not always appear vicious!
- Teach children to leave wildlife alone. Be sure your child knows to tell you if an animal bites or scratches them.
- Have your dogs, cats, and ferrets vaccinated against rabies. Keep the vaccinations up to date.
- Tightly close garbage cans. Open trash will attract wild or stray animals to your home or yard.
- Do not leave pet food outside because this may attract wild or stray animals to your home or yard.
- Call your doctor for advice if an animal bites you. Report the incident to your local health department.

**If you have any questions or concerns about the West Virginia Oral Rabies Vaccination Project, or if you have come into contact with a bait, contact the West Virginia ORV Project at 1-800-423-1271.**

The West Virginia Oral Rabies Vaccination Project would like to thank the Ohio Department of Health for providing samples of public education materials used during Ohio's Oral Rabies Vaccination Project.



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[www.wvdhhr.org/bph/oehp/sdc/rabies\\_orv.htm](http://www.wvdhhr.org/bph/oehp/sdc/rabies_orv.htm)

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# The West Virginia ORAL RABIES VACCINATION PROJECT

# What is the ORV Bait?

The bait is a square block made of fish meal and fish oil. Raccoons like the smell and taste of the bait. The vaccine is inside a plastic packet in the middle of the block.



Bait containing oral rabies vaccine  
(dimensions 1 1/4" X 1 1/4" X 3/4")

## ► Is the vaccine harmful?

The vaccine is not harmful to wild animals or pets. Although the exposure risk to humans is very slight, the following information is important:

- Be aware of what the bait looks like.
- Encourage children to leave the baits alone.
- Keep dogs and cats inside or on leashes at least a week after your area was baited.
- Do not attempt to take a bait away from your pet; you may be bitten.
- If you touch the bait or the liquid vaccine inside the bait (a red fluid), thoroughly wash your hands or exposed skin with soap and water.

## ► Are gloves required to handle the bait, or will I be harmed if I handle the intact bait without gloves?

It is not harmful to touch an intact bait; however, the bait does have a strong odor, so you might prefer to wear gloves when handling it. Wash your hands thoroughly after any direct contact with the bait.



## ► What if I find a bait near my home?

Leave it alone, or if it is intact and out in the open, toss it into deeper cover.

## ► What if my dog or cat eats a bait?

The bait is not harmful to dogs or cats. Do not try to take the bait from an animal.

## ► What if my child eats or has contact with a bait?

The bait has a strong fish odor and is usually unappealing to children. It is not possible to get rabies from the vaccine. People with certain medical conditions, such as an immunodeficiency problem, may be prone to a local infection from vaccinia if the vaccine (red liquid) gets into an open wound. Using soap and water to wash any skin area exposed to the vaccine can prevent this. In the unlikely event that a child bites the bait or the actual vaccine packet, contact the West Virginia ORV Project at 1-800-423-1271.

## ► If my child or pet eats the vaccine, will either of them get rabies?

No. It is not possible to get rabies from the vaccine. The vaccine does not contain the rabies virus, only a single gene from that virus.

## ► Can this vaccine be used to vaccinate my dog or cat against rabies?

No. Vaccination of pets should be done by veterinarians in accordance with state and local laws. Pet vaccination is necessary to protect your pet against rabies.

# What is Raccoon Rabies?

Raccoon rabies is caused by a virus that attacks the brain. Symptoms include unusual or aggressive behavior, an inability to eat or drink, balance problems, circling, seizures, coma, and death. Rabies is also found in skunks, foxes, bats, and other wildlife. Wild animals can infect cats, dogs, other pets, and domestic animals.

## ► Why should I be concerned about raccoon rabies?

Raccoons are more likely to be around people and pets than are other types of wildlife. Raccoon rabies was first seen in West Virginia in 1977 in the eastern part of the state and has slowly spread westward. Raccoon rabies was confirmed in Fayette, Nicholas, Raleigh, and Webster counties in 2001, and in Braxton County in 2002. Raccoon rabies is getting closer to the population centers of Kanawha and Wood counties and may reach the Ohio River and beyond.

## ► How can I become infected with the rabies virus?

The rabies virus is in the saliva of infected animals. Rabies can be spread if the saliva of an infected animal gets into a bite, scratch, scrape, or open wound.

## ► What should I do if I am bitten by or exposed to an animal that might have rabies?

Wash the wound with soap and water immediately. Call your local health department to report the exposure. If possible, capture or kill the animal, but do not damage the animal's head. Go to your family doctor or the emergency room.

