



**Press Release**  
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Medical Community Concerned About Increase in Animal Rabies Cases in Region**

*Community should know how to respond in case of an animal bite.*

KNOX CITY, Texas (Date, 2020) – Cases of rabies across the region are on the rise, with more than 70 cases reported by the Texas Department of State Health Services. Year to date, there have been two cases in Knox County along with two cases in neighboring Haskell County, with five additional being treated for positive exposure. For officials at Knox County Hospital District, the rise in cases are concerning.

“Rabies is a vicious disease of the nervous system that can lead to very serious conditions if left untreated, including death,” says Dr. Rodney Sholty, a family medicine physician in Knox City. “One case is too many, so we need to raise awareness now before cases get out of hand.”

Rabies is a viral disease that attacks the nervous system of warm-blooded animals such as dogs, cats, skunks, racoons, and bats. If left untreated, rabies can be lethal to humans.

The virus is easily spread when the saliva of an infected animal is introduced to another animal or human, typically by a bite or scratch.

There are three stages of symptoms commonly associated with rabies. The first stage typically mimics flu-like symptoms, which can include fever, headache, anxiety, sore throat, and cough. The second stage is the onset of neurologic symptoms, which include aggression, convulsions, hypersalivation, hallucinations, paralysis, and hyperventilation. If left untreated, the third stage is coma, which ultimately leads to death.

“Following a bite from an unknown animal, you should wash the wound thoroughly with soap and water and apply an iodine-based antiseptic,” Dr. Sholty says. “Threats to humans can be mitigated by seeking medical attention as quickly as possible.”

Control and prevention of rabies begins with community knowledge.

By law, pet dogs and cats must be vaccinated by a veterinarian against rabies. A veterinarian can advise on the best vaccination for your pet. Preventing your pet from roaming the neighborhood is another way to reduce their chances of contracting the disease.

**MORE**



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To prevent possible infection, Dr. Sholty recommends people avoid contact with wild animals and stray dogs and cats as they could possibly be carrying the disease. If you are traveling to countries where rabies is common, it is recommended that you get vaccinated prior to travel.

Additionally, Dr. Sholty says that education is key to preventing rabies. Children should be educated about the risk of rabies as well as bite prevention as they are the most common victims of severe dog bites.

For more information about medical care following possible rabies infection, please call Knox City Clinic (940-657-3906) or Munday Clinic (940-422-5271). To learn more about local healthcare programs, services, and medical providers, please visit [www.knoxhospital.org](http://www.knoxhospital.org).

### **About Knox County Hospital District**

Founded in 1926, Knox County Hospital District provides healthcare for residents of Knox County and surrounding areas. The district offers a wealth of medical services, including 24-hour emergency care, advanced radiology services, a clinical laboratory, home health, physical therapy, long-term care, patient education, and more. For additional information, please call 940-657-3535 or visit [www.knoxhospital.org](http://www.knoxhospital.org).

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