



**PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT**  
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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **CANINE DISTEMPER IN RACCOONS**

#### **Vaccinate Your Pet**

**(SANTA BARBARA, Calif.)** – Santa Barbara County Animal Services is advising the community to be on high alert after identifying multiple cases of distemper in wildlife, especially raccoons, throughout the city of Santa Barbara and southern Santa Barbara County. The public was first alerted to this risk to domestic dogs in October of 2017. We are still seeing affected raccoons in heavily populated areas, thus we encourage owners to be sure their pets are current on all vaccines.

Canine distemper is a highly contagious disease caused by a virus that attacks the respiratory, gastrointestinal, and nervous system. Canine distemper poses no threat to human health, but unvaccinated dogs can become infected.

Raccoons that are infected with distemper often move slowly, stumble, and can appear blind and/or confused. They may lose their fear of humans, and can become aggressive if cornered. Distemper is most commonly spread through coughing infected respiratory secretions, but can also be shed through most other bodily secretions, including urine.

If you notice a raccoon or other wildlife behaving abnormally or acting sick, do not approach the animal. In unincorporated areas of the county, call Santa Barbara County Animal Services at (805) 681-5285. In the City of Santa Barbara, call Santa Barbara City Animal Control at (805) 963-1513.

Keep your dog on a leash, scan your yard before allowing your dog out, and do not leave pet food outside that can attract wildlife.

The cost of prevention is much cheaper than the cost of treatment, so please call your veterinarian today to have your pet vaccinated or for any questions about your pet's health or vaccination history.

**-30-**