



NEWS BULLETIN

SUFFOLK COUNTY DEPARTMENT of CIVIL SERVICE OFFICE OF PUBLIC INFORMATION

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For **Y**our **I**nformation from Suffolk County Department of Health Services
Dr. Humayun J. Chaudhry, D.O., M.S., Commissioner

SUFFOLK COUNTY RABIES BAITING PROGRAM BEGINS SEPTEMBER 2008

In an effort to contain the spread of terrestrial rabies on Long Island and potentially eliminate the virus from local wildlife, the Suffolk County Department of Health Services, in cooperation with the New York State Department of Health, Cornell University and the US Department of Agriculture's Wildlife Services, will begin distributing one inch square fish-meal baits containing an oral rabies vaccine (ORV) from both county vehicles and a helicopter in western Suffolk County.

Beginning **Wednesday, SEPTEMBER 3rd** and ending on **Friday, SEPTEMBER 12th, 2008**, about 100,000 baits will be distributed by county vehicles in **residential areas**. **For a three to four day period, beginning on Thursday, September 10, 2008**, approximately 78,000 baits will also be released by a NY State helicopter (weather permitting) that will target **wooded areas**. Raccoons are attracted to the fish-meal bait and become immunized when they consume the vaccine contained inside of the bait. **Contact with the vaccine poses no health threat to humans or domestic animals.**



To view locations in your community where ground baiting and aerial drops will be made, please visit the SCDHS website at:

<http://www.suffolkcountyny.gov/Home/departments/healthservices/publichealth/baitingprogram.aspx>

Approximate dates will be provided showing when baiting activities will be occurring.

The New York State and Suffolk County Departments of Health recommend the following actions be taken during this vaccination campaign:

- * Supervise children outdoors both during, and for one week following, the bait distribution to avoid inadvertent contact with baits.
- * Keep dogs and cats indoors or on leashes when outdoors both during, and for one week following, bait distribution to decrease the chance these pets will eat the vaccine.
- * The baits are not harmful to dogs or cats, but may cause them to vomit if ingested in large numbers. Do not try to remove bait from an animal's mouth. **Whenever there is direct contact with the bait, contact the Suffolk County Public Health Hot-Line at 631-787-2200 or the toll free number 1-800-222-1222.**
- * Call your local hospital **Emergency Room** in the unlikely event that a child bites through the packet and ingests the liquid.
- * Wash hands immediately after bare-hand contact with the bait before making a call to report the exposure.
- * It is important to remember that it is not possible to get rabies from the vaccine. The vaccine does not contain the rabies virus but does contain attenuated vaccinia virus.
- * Residents are instructed not to move baits found near the home if the baits are not out in the open. These bait packets have a strong fishmeal odor that is not attractive to people and most other animals, and are clearly identified with the following label: "Rabies Vaccine Live Vaccinia Vector. Do Not Disturb, Merial, Inc US Vet Lic. No. 298 1-877-722-6725.
- * If bait is found intact and out in the open where pets or children may come in contact with it, residents are advised to wear gloves and toss the bait deeper into the bushes.

