



Dear Patient,

This letter has important information about rabies due to bites from **dogs, cats, and ferrets**.

Rabies is rare in the United States but almost always deadly without prompt treatment. You are more likely to get rabies when bitten by a dog, cat, or ferret IF:

- In another country;
- Animal brought from another country in the past 6 months;
- Animal had contact with a bat or other wild animals like raccoons, coyotes, foxes, or skunks; or
- Animal was ill and not acting normally.

If any of these conditions apply to your bite, please call the Whatcom County Health Department (WCHD) at 360-676-6724.

Dogs, cats and ferrets in Washington State are very unlikely to have rabies but these animals must still be observed for 10 days after biting someone. This is because a dog, cat, or ferret with rabies will get sick and possibly die within 10 days. If that happens, the animal should be tested for rabies. If the test is positive for rabies, then any person bitten or scratched by the animal should be treated promptly.

After a dog, cat, or ferret bites or scratches someone, it must be observed for 10 days. During the 10 days of observation, the owner must follow these rules:

- Restrict the animal so that it cannot escape.
 - Do not leave the dog, cat, or ferret loose or by itself in the yard.
 - Do not take it off your property, including to the dog park, on a walk, or anywhere in a car.
- Do not let the animal have contact with people or with other animals (pets or wild).
- Observe the dog, cat, or ferret daily.
- Do not vaccinate the dog, cat, or ferret for rabies during the 10 days.
- Vaccinate the animal after the 10th day if its rabies shots are not up-to-date.
- Do not sell, destroy or get rid of the animal.
- **If dog, cat, or ferret gets sick, acts strangely, or dies within the 10 days of observation, immediately have a veterinarian examine it for signs of rabies and contact the Whatcom County Health Department.**

If the dog, cat, or ferret cannot be watched for the 10 days as described or if you have questions, please call WCHD. If the animal that bit or scratched you does not belong to your family, you may report the bite to your local animal control agency.

Note: Beginning January 1, 2012, Washington State will require that all dogs, cats, and ferrets be currently vaccinated against rabies.

Please call the Whatcom County Health Department at 360-676-6724 if you have any questions.

Animal Control Agencies in Whatcom County

For Whatcom County: Whatcom County Humane Society, Animal Control: 360-733-2080 ext: 1

For City of Lynden: Lynden Police Department: 360-354-2828