

August 11, 2025

CONTACT: Kara Kane / kara.kane@erie.gov / (716) 858-4941

Planes and helicopters to drop rabies vaccine over Erie County

*USDA program distributes oral rabies vaccine for wildlife from the air from August 13-23
Erie County vector control staff will distribute vaccine on the ground through August 16-19*

ERIE COUNTY, NY – Erie County will participate in a nationally coordinated effort to reduce risks for rabies in wildlife in August. As in past summers, aerial distribution of bait containing rabies vaccine will take place in Erie County from August 13 through August 23. [Schedule dependent on weather.] Ground bait distribution will begin on August 16.

90% of reported rabies cases in the United States are in wildlife, making it important to reduce risks of exposure, infection and death in animals through the use of an oral vaccine.

“Our vector control team on the ground and pilots in the sky will distribute thousands of vaccine packets this month. Each of these green bait pieces is the size of a quarter coin, and they will be eaten by raccoons, foxes and coyotes,” **said Deputy Director of Environmental Health Peter Tripi, who manages the county’s Vector Control Program.** “This protection for wildlife will reduce risk of rabies transmission if those wild animals come into contact with people or pets.”

“By protecting our wildlife population we are also reducing risks of rabies exposure in domestic animals, livestock and humans,” **said Commissioner of Health Dr. Gale Burstein.** “This is another reminder that preventing rabies requires constant vigilance. Pet owners have a responsibility to keep their dogs, cats and ferrets up to date on their rabies vaccines.”

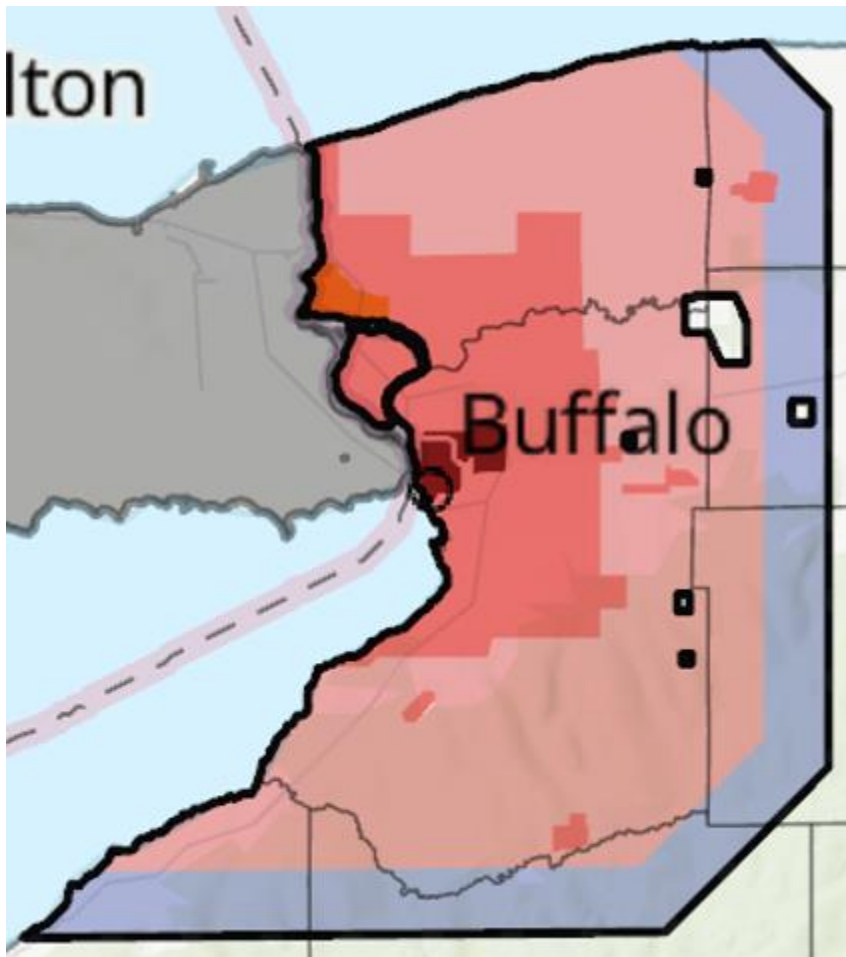
She continued, “Later this week our department will announce the dates and locations for free rabies vaccine drive-through clinics in September, a chance to get your pets vaccinated at no cost.”

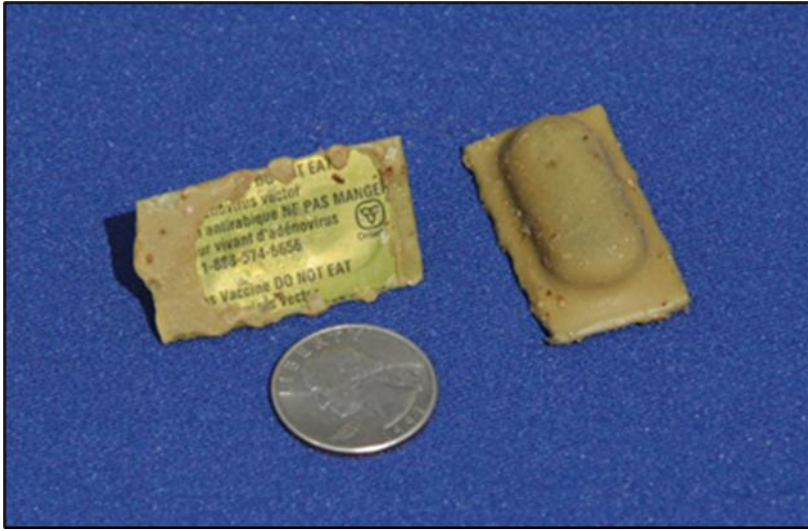
- Do NOT disturb vaccine packets. Most packets are eaten within four days; almost all baits will be gone within a week. If packets are not found and eaten, they will harmlessly dissolve and exposed vaccine will become inactivated. If you must move a vaccine packet, wear gloves or use a plastic bag or paper towel to pick it up. Place any damaged baits in the trash; throw intact baits into a wooded area or other raccoon/wildlife habitat.
- Residents should WASH HANDS IMMEDIATELY if they come into direct contact with the vaccine or packets, then call the NYSDOH Rabies Information Line at (888) 574-6656.

Additional recommendations include:

- Supervise children’s outdoor activities during bait distribution and for one week afterward (through the end of August).

- Confine dogs and cats indoors and observe leash laws during the bait distribution interval and for one week afterward. This will increase the probability of raccoon vaccination and decrease the chance of pets finding the baits.
- Residents should not risk being bitten while trying to remove bait from your pet's mouth. The bait will not harm your pet, though an animal may vomit if it consumes several baits. Contact a veterinarian if your pet has consumed vaccine baits.
- Residents who come in contact with wildlife vaccine packets can call the NYSDOH Rabies Information Line (888) 574-6656 with questions or concerns.





[National Rabies Management Program Overview | Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service \(usda.gov\)](https://www.usda.gov/nrm)

Erie County Department of Health (ECDOH) Rabies, Rodents, Arboviruses and Related Information:

<https://www3.erie.gov/envhealth/wildlife-oral-rabies-vaccination-orv-program>

New York State Department of Health, Rabies:

<https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/zoonoses/rabies>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Rabies: <https://www.cdc.gov/rabies>

###