

Microbe Monthly

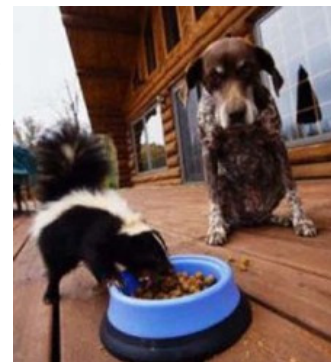
Communicable Disease Report

El Paso County Department
of Health & Environment

April 2010

Rabies in El Paso County

Rabies in skunks is on the rise in El Paso County and we are seeing spillover infections in other mammals. Since June 2009, rabies has spread from skunks to a horse, mountain lion, and a fox in our County. The resurgence of skunk rabies is concerning because skunks often encounter domestic dogs and cats. Unvaccinated dogs and cats that are exposed to rabies have an extremely high chance of getting infected and are contagious once symptoms develop. These infected pets pose a significant risk to humans as they can bite people or other animals when they are ill. Already in 2010, El Paso County has recorded three rabid skunks and there have been 28 rabid animals statewide. You may hear about a potential rabies exposure from patients in your practice.



If a person is bitten or scratched by a wild animal or a domestic animal unknown to them the incident should be reported to the Humane Society of the Pikes Peak Region or local animal control. High risk situations will be evaluated by the Health Department who works closely with the Humane Society. Based on information gathered in the assessment, our Communicable Disease epidemiologists may recommend rabies post exposure prophylaxis (PEP), in which case we will provide information on medication dosing to the clinician who will be administering PEP.

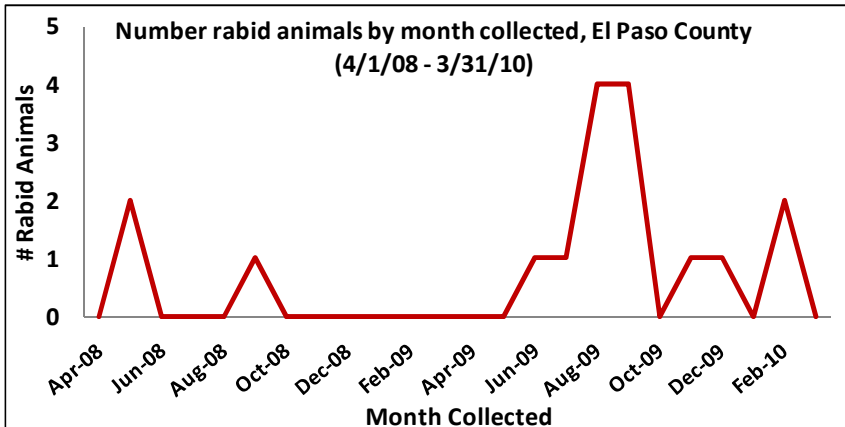
CDC has recently updated their recommendations for PEP, which now advise a 4-dose regimen for rabies vaccine. Full report is available at: www.cdc.gov/mmwr/pdf/rr/rr5902.pdf.

In response to the unprecedented rise in skunk rabies in the county and statewide, the Health Department is increasing our rabies education efforts to the public, providers and veterinarians. In the coming weeks, rabies prevention messages will be shared through public service announcements; print, radio and television media; training for area veterinarians; and enhanced rabies information on our website www.elpasocountyhealth.org.

El Paso County Disease Trends

In March 2010, 50 communicable disease cases were reported and investigated: campylobacter (3), cryptosporidiosis (1), giardia (6), Haemophilus influenza (1), chronic hepatitis B (6), influenza-related hospitalizations (1), invasive pneumococcal disease (10), Kawasaki syndrome (1), malaria—foreign acquired (1), Salmonella (3), STEC—shiga toxin producing E. coli (1), varicella (9) and viral meningitis (7).

Communicable Disease Program staff also investigated 2 gastrointestinal illness outbreaks in March (1 in a long-term care facility, and one possibly related to a restaurant), and received 5 possible food-borne illness complaints.



Hot Topics—State and National

- In March, El Paso county saw an increase in **invasive pneumococcal disease**, particularly among children under 5 years of age. Communicable disease program staff are working with the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment to investigate these cases.
- Interim state-specific **Influenza A (H1N1)** 2009 monovalent vaccination coverage has been reported by CDC. In Colorado, 35% of children 6 months—17 years received H1N1 vaccine, as well as 20% of adults, and 33% of persons in the initial Advisory Council on Immunization Practice target groups. See report at: www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5912a2.htm
- In 2009 the United States **tuberculosis rate** was 3.8 cases per 100,000 population, a decrease of 11.4% from the rate of 4.2 per 100,000 reported for 2008. The 2009 rate showed the greatest single-year decrease ever recorded and was the lowest recorded rate since national TB surveillance began in 1953.

Contact Information

CD/TB Program

Weekday Hours (M-Th)* 719-578-3220
After-Hours Emergency 719-385-9622

Immunizations

719-578-3272

Environmental Health

719-575-8636

*Note: Health Department regular hours are Monday—Thursday, 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment

Weekday Hours (M-F) 303-692-2700
After-Hours 303-370-9395