

Rabies Awareness and Prevention Poster Contest

Information & Instructions for High School Students



Do you know what rabies is?

- It's a disease caused by a virus that affects the brain of mammals.
- Rabies can make wild animals behave strangely. For example, they may lose their fear of people, become aggressive, or the animal might have trouble walking or flying (bats).
- Wild mammals that have rabies can transmit the virus to other animals and people by biting. This can also happen if the saliva of a rabid animal gets into the eyes, nose, mouth, or open cuts on the skin of another animal or person.
- Rabies infections in animals and people are almost always fatal. Pets can be vaccinated to prevent infection and there is post-exposure treatment that can keep people from getting rabies if it's administered soon after exposure.

What mammals are most likely to have rabies in Texas?

- Skunks, foxes, raccoons, coyotes, and bats are high-risk animals for having rabies. Texas has more bats test positive for rabies than any other state in the U.S.!
- Domestic animals, including pets, can sometimes get rabies from wild animals. They can then transmit rabies to other animals and people.

What mammals are least likely to have rabies in Texas?

- Cage-raised animals like hamsters and gerbils.
- Rodents (rats, mice, squirrels) and rabbits.
- Domestic dogs, cats, and ferrets current on their rabies vaccinations.

What do you know about bats?

- Bats are helpful in nature. Most eat pesky insects and some pollinate plants.
- There are 43 kinds of bats in the U.S. and Texas has 33 of these species! Texas has the world's largest known urban bat colony in Austin and the world's largest known cave bat colony near San Antonio.
- If a bat is sick with rabies, it might not be able to fly and you could find one on the ground.
- It can be hard to see bite marks from a bat because their teeth can be very small.

Do you know what to do if you see a bat?

- Don't touch it! If there is any possibility the bat had contact with a person or domestic animal, the bat will need to be safely collected and sent to a rabies laboratory for testing.
- If you see a bat at school, tell a teacher or school administrator right away.

Do you know how to keep your dog, cat, or ferret safe from getting sick with rabies?

- Take your pet to your veterinarian every year. The veterinarian will make sure your dog, cat, or ferret is current on its rabies vaccinations.
- Keep your pet away from wild animals.
- Horses and livestock, such as cattle and sheep, should also be vaccinated for rabies.

Now we want you to design an educational poster about what you've just learned! You may use non-digital (traditional) OR digital (computer) art.

Poster Instructions/Pointers:

- The poster **MUST** say something about rabies.
- Your design must be original - make it unique!
- The information needs to be accurate.
- The fewer words, the better! Spell them correctly and make sure they are easily readable.
- Color is good!
- The poster must be at least 8½ X 11 but no bigger than 11 X 17.

SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS:

- High school students in grades 9-12 are eligible to participate in this contest.
- Posters created with **non-digital** art must be mailed to: Texas Department of State Health Services, Zoonosis Control Branch, MC-1956, PO Box 149347, Austin, TX 78714-9347.
- If using **digital art**, have a school staff member (teacher, school nurse, etc.) email a pdf of the poster to: The.Vet@dshs.texas.gov. School staff member **must** include the following information in the email:
 - Subject line should read "rabies poster contest, (school name) high school entry"
 - Include in body of email:
 - Full name of student (name PDF file "last name, first name")
 - Grade and age of student
 - School name and full address of school
 - School staff member name, email and phone number
 - Principal name, email and phone number
- Posters accepted any time prior to, but no later than, the **April 7, 2023** deadline!