Rabies Awareness and Prevention Poster Contest

Information & Instructions for K-8th



Do you know what rabies is?

- It's an illness that affects the brain of mammals. Mammals are animals with hair – female mammals have mammary glands for making milk for their babies.
- Rabies makes wild animals act strange. For example, they don't mind being near people, might be aggressive, or the animal might have trouble walking or flying (bats).
- Wild mammals that have rabies can give this illness 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.
- Animals and people that get rabies almost always die. Luckily, there is medicine that can keep people and their pets from getting rabies if it's given right away.

What mammals are <u>most</u> 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 US!
- Even cats and dogs sometimes get rabies from wild animals. They can then give rabies to other animals and people.

What mammals are <u>least</u> likely to have rabies in Texas?

- Cage-raised animals like hamsters and gerbils.
- Wild rats, mice, squirrels, and rabbits.
- Domestic dogs, cats, and ferrets current on their rabies shots.

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 United States and Texas has 33 of these kinds! Texas has the largest known city bat colony in Austin and the 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! Find an adult and show it to them immediately.
- If you see a bat at school, tell a teacher 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 vaccinated for rabies, just like when you go to the doctor to get your shots.
- Keep your pet away from wild animals that can have rabies.
- There are also rabies vaccinations for horses and livestock, such as cows and sheep.

For more information about rabies awareness, students can watch the short video Protect People Protect Bats.
(www.youtube.com/watch?v=O0IUxHkbXzI**)**

Go to the DSHS Zoonosis Control website to see images of previous winning posters: www.dshs.texas.gov/rabies/rabies-awareness-prevention-poster

Students in grades 6-8 have the option to create a poster using digital art!

Poster Instructions/Pointers:

- The poster MUST say something about rabies.
- Your artwork 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!
- For hand drawn posters, the poster must be at least 8 ½ X 11 but less than 11 X 17 (*if this big, artwork must be at least an inch from the edge*).
- **Please do not use Artificial Intelligence (AI) art to create your poster.**