



JEFFERSON COUNTY General Health District

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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 15, 2026

Contact: Andrew Henry
740-283-8530

Oral Rabies Vaccination Notice

STEUBENVILLE, OH – The United States Department of Agriculture, Wildlife Services program (USDA-WS) will distribute oral rabies vaccine (ORV) baits in Ohio beginning on or about April 18, 2026 to vaccinate raccoons against the rabies virus. Bait distribution in Ohio is part of a nationwide, cooperative effort by USDA to prevent the spread of raccoon rabies in the eastern United States. Implementation of this program in Ohio is a cooperative effort between USDA, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Ohio Department of Health, and other agencies.

Beginning on or about April 18, approximately 300,000 ONRAB baits containing oral rabies vaccine (ORV) will be distributed across a 1700 square-mile bait zone in eastern Ohio, targeting raccoons and other wildlife. These baits will be distributed by low-flying airplanes and helicopter (*if applicable*) throughout a vaccination area that includes parts of the following counties: Ashtabula, Belmont, Carroll, Columbiana, Harrison, **Jefferson**, Mahoning, Portage, and Trumbull and the cities of Ashtabula, Belle Vista, Boardman, Conneaut, Edgewood, Geneva, Hubbard, Lisbon, Niles, Poland, Struthers, Warren, and Youngstown.

The ORV baits are blister packets containing liquid vaccine and coated with an edible, vanilla-scented wax to attract raccoons. Each bait is marked with a toll-free number (1-888-574-6656) for people to call for information if they find a bait. It is recommended that anyone who finds a bait leave it alone to allow wildlife to find it. However, if a bait is intact and out in the open, it can be tossed deeper into the woods or brush where a wild animal is more likely to find it. People should wear gloves or use a towel if it is necessary to handle baits and wash their hands afterward. Pet owners should not attempt to take baits away from their pets, as they may be bitten in the process and exposed to the vaccine. Although baits are not harmful to pets, ingestion of a large number of baits may cause temporary stomach upset. Anyone who is exposed to the liquid vaccine contained within the bait should wash his or her hands immediately.

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