

Why is the 10-day quarantine necessary?

- Rabies is a fatal viral infection of the central nervous system of warm-blooded animals, including humans. It is usually transmitted through the bite of an animal that has the virus in its saliva, or more rarely by contamination of an open cut or mucous membrane (eyes, nostrils or mouth) with saliva of a rabid animal.
- When an apparently healthy animal bites a person, there is a possibility that the animal could be in the infectious phase of the disease without showing signs of rabies. (That is, the animal could have the rabies virus in its saliva.) In these rare cases, the animal will develop recognizable signs of rabies in a few days, allowing time to treat the bite victim preventively for rabies exposure.
- The 10-day quarantine period ensures that the animal remains available so that it can be observed for signs of rabies. If the animal remains well during the 10 days, this indicates it did not have the rabies virus in its saliva at the time of the bite, and therefore the bite victim does not have to receive an expensive and unpleasant series of shots to prevent rabies. *This is why it is important that the animal under quarantine be strictly confined at all times to ensure that it cannot run away or be injured.*
- The 10-day confinement and observation period for dogs, cats and ferrets that bite humans has stood the test of time as a way to prevent human rabies. This quarantine period avoids the need to euthanize the animal in order to test for the rabies virus.

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ANIMAL BITES A Pet Owner's Guide

Local municipal ordinance requires that any dog, cat or ferret which bites a person be quarantined for ten days so that it can be observed for signs of rabies.

**Central Racine County
Health Department**

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UNVACCINATED DOG, CAT OR FERRET

- If an unvaccinated animal bites a person, an officer will order that animal quarantined for a period of at least 10 days after the bite. The "officer" can be a public health official, a law enforcement officer, a DNR warden, or a humane officer.
- Within 24 hours after the quarantine order is issued, the unvaccinated animal must be delivered to an isolation facility (e.g. veterinary clinic, humane society shelter, animal shelter) for a 10-day observation period.
- During the 10-day quarantine the animal will be held under strict isolation at the isolation facility and examined by a licensed veterinarian on the first day, the last day, and one intervening day of the observation period.
- The animal may be released after the veterinarian certifies that the it has exhibited no signs of rabies during the 10-day quarantine period.
- The veterinarian may extend the quarantine if clinical signs warrant the extension. This rarely occurs.
- After the animal is released from quarantine, the animal can be vaccinated against rabies. Rabies vaccinations are not to be administered during the observation period.
- In the event that an animal under quarantine does exhibit signs of rabies, state statute requires that the animal be humanely euthanized and submitted for rabies testing.

The owner of the animal is responsible for all expenses incurred in connection with the rabies quarantine.



Failure to comply with this order may result in a daily fine and/or the animal may be seized.

VACCINATED DOG, CAT OR FERRET

- If a vaccinated animal (as shown by a valid rabies certificate) bites a person, an officer will order that animal quarantined for a period of at least 10 days after the bite. The "officer" can be a public health official, a law enforcement officer, a DNR warden, or a humane officer.
- Vaccinated animals may be quarantined on the premises of the owner if the animal is kept in an escape proof enclosure or in the home. Dogs may only be allowed outside on the owner's premises for brief periods of time to urinate or defecate while under the control of an adult. If a quarantine cannot be adequately maintained on the premises of the owner, an officer may order a vaccinated animal to be quarantined at an isolation facility.
- During the 10-day quarantine the animal must be examined by a veterinarian on the first day, the last day, and one intervening day of the observation period. This is the only time the animal may leave the owner's premises.
- If the animal displays signs of illness or a change in behavior, it is crucial that the owner notify the veterinarian immediately.
- The veterinarian may extend the quarantine if clinical signs warrant. This rarely occurs.
- Rabies vaccinations are not to be administered during the observation period.
- In the event that an animal under quarantine does exhibit signs of rabies, state statute requires that the animal be humanely euthanized and submitted for rabies testing.