



JEFFERSON COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE

Public Health Facility, 531 Meade Street, Watertown, New York 13601

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July 27, 2026

Annual Oral Rabies Vaccine Bait Program to Begin

Watertown, NY – The United States Department of Agriculture, Wildlife Services program (USDA-WS) will distribute oral rabies vaccine (ORV) baits in New York State, including across Jefferson County. Weather permitting, ORV baits will be distributed throughout Jefferson County beginning Friday, July 31. Bait distribution in New York is part of a nationwide, cooperative effort by USDA to prevent the spread of raccoon rabies in the eastern United States.

Baits will be distributed by hand on the ground and from low-flying aircraft and helicopters. Please note that bad weather may cause delays or extend the bait drop schedule.

Each vaccine-containing bait consists of a plastic blister pack coated with a sweet attractant to entice animals to eat the bait. When raccoons, foxes, skunks and coyotes eat the bait, they become vaccinated against rabies which helps stops the spread of rabies.

If you find an ORV bait (pictured below), follow these simple steps:

- Leave the bait untouched. Instruct children to leave the baits alone.
- If you suspect skin contact with the vaccine itself, a pink-colored liquid, immediately wash the area with soap and water and call USDA-WS at 1-866-4-USDA-WS (1-866-487-3297) or call JCPHS at 315-786-3700 for further guidance.
- Do not attempt to remove a bait from your pet, as you may be bitten. The bait is not harmful to your pet. If by chance numerous baits are consumed, your pet may get an upset stomach. If your pet ingests a bait, avoid getting your pet's saliva into your eyes, mucous membranes or skin lesions for 24 hours.

Always notify your medical provider or JCPHS if you are bitten by a pet or a wild animal. Additionally, keep your pets up to date on their rabies vaccination. JCPHS is hosting summer rabies vaccination clinics at multiple locations throughout Jefferson County in August. Please visit our website to view the schedule and clinic details: <https://www.jeffersoncountyny.gov/rabies-control>



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