

2018 Rabies Vaccine Bait Drop



The rabies vaccine bait drop is a research initiative of the United States Department of Agriculture that began in 1997 to help keep raccoon rabies from spreading north across the Canadian border. Rabies vaccine wrapped in sweet-scented bait will be dropped from aircraft in rural areas and hand-placed in large residential areas around Vermont.

Weather permitting, airplanes flying out of a regional airport will drop bait from an altitude of about 500 feet. An “on/off” switch allows pilots to keep bait from dropping on things like roadways and homes. In more densely populated areas, teams of two people will carefully place bait by hand out of obvious sight.

In August, rabies vaccine bait will be dropped or hand-placed in:

Addison County

Addison, Bridport, Bristol, Cornwall, Ferrisburgh, Leicester, Middlebury, Monkton, New Haven, North Ferrisburgh, Panton, Salisbury, Shoreham, Starksboro, Vergennes, Waltham, Weybridge, Whiting

Caledonia County

Barnet, Burke, Danville, Groton, Hardwick, Kirby, Lyndon, Newark, Peacham, Ryegate, Sheffield, St. Johnsbury, Stannard, Sutton, Walden, Waterford, Wheelock

Chittenden County

Bolton, Buel's Gore, Burlington, Charlotte, Colchester, Essex, Hinesburg, Huntington, Jericho, Milton, Richmond, Shelburne, South Burlington, St. George, Underhill, Westford, Williston, Winooski

Essex County

Averill, Avery's Gore, Bloomfield, Brighton, Brunswick, Canaan, Concord, East Haven, Ferdinand, Granby, Guildhall, Lemington, Lewis, Lunenburg, Maidstone, Norton, Victory, Warner's Grant, Warren Gore

Franklin County

Bakersfield, Berkshire, Enosburgh, Fairfax, Fairfield, Fletcher, Franklin, Georgia, Highgate, Montgomery, Richford, Sheldon, St. Albans City, St. Albans Town, Swanton

Grand Isle County

Alburgh, Grand Isle, Isle La Motte, North Hero, South Hero

Lamoille County

Belvidere, Cambridge, Eden, Elmore, Hyde Park, Johnson, Morristown, Stowe, Waterville, Wolcott

Orleans County

Albany, Barton, Brownington, Charleston, Coventry, Craftsbury, Derby, Glover, Greensboro, Holland, Irasburg, Jay, Lowell, Morgan, Newport City, Newport Town, Troy, Westfield, Westmore

Washington County

Barre City, Barre Town, Berlin, Cabot, Calais, Duxbury, East Montpelier, Fayston, Marshfield, Middlesex, Montpelier, Moretown, Northfield, Plainfield, Waitsfield, Waterbury, Woodbury, Worcester

**Questions? Call the Vermont Rabies Hotline:
1-800-4-RABIES (1-800-472-2437)**

When will the bait drop begin and how long will it last?

This bait drop will begin in August, depending on weather conditions and other factors. The air drop will take several days and hand placement will take up to two weeks. Times and locations of the bait drop are publicized in advance through the local media.

Will this project get rid of rabies?

No, this project will not get rid of rabies. This research project is simply an experiment to see whether a raccoon population in a given geographical area can be vaccinated with a bait drop, and to find out which methods are most effective. Therefore, all usual precautions against rabies must still be taken: vaccinate all pets, including cats, keep a healthy distance from wild animals, and call your doctor right away if you are bitten or get animal saliva in a cut, eyes, nose, or mouth.

Who is conducting this research?

The project is an interstate/international cooperative effort. The research will be directed by the United States Department of Agriculture's Wildlife Services. Other partners include the Vermont Departments of Health and Fish & Wildlife and the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets.

What is the bait made of and what does it look like?

The bait is a blister pack covered with a sweet-smelling dark green waxy coating; the dark green coating has a label printed in black (see the photo on the front).

Is the bait harmful to children or pets?

Millions of baits have been dropped in the United States and Canada with no ill effects reported in people or pets. Even if you are exposed to the vaccine, you cannot get rabies from it. While the bait is not harmful to children, pets or other wildlife, it should not be handled or disturbed. If you come across the bait, leave it where it is so that it can be eaten by raccoons. If your dog picks up a bait, do not risk getting bitten by trying to remove the bait from the dog's mouth.

Will the bait attract raccoons or other animals to my property?

No, the bait will not attract raccoons or other animals to your property. However, any raccoons that are already using the property will come across the baits.

Can I get bait to spread around my property?

The bait is not available for personal use. This is a research project directed by the United States Department of Agriculture that must be conducted in a controlled and scientific manner. The bait is an experimental use product approved by the United States Department of Agriculture and made available for this purpose to federal and state agencies.

If I am bitten or scratched by a raccoon, should I assume that it does not have rabies since it probably ate the bait?

No. Every raccoon bite or scratch must be considered a potential rabies exposure. There is no way to tell if a raccoon was exposed to the disease prior to eating the bait. Call your doctor right away if you are bitten or get animal saliva in a cut, eyes, nose or mouth.

What should I do if I find a bait?

If you find a bait, do not disturb it. Keep children away. If your pet eats a bait or your pet or child brings one home, call the [Vermont Rabies Hotline 1-800-472-2437](tel:1-800-472-2437) (toll free in Vermont) to report it.