



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **INCREASED NUMBER OF CANINE DISTEMPER IN RACCOONS REPORTED IN WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE**

**Animal Control recommending all local dogs be vaccinated against the virus**

**Whitchurch-Stouffville, ON** – Animal Control Services and the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville are warning residents to be aware of raccoons infected with the Canine Distemper Virus, a virus that may be lethal to dogs.

Since January, residents in the Community of Stouffville have reported a higher than normal number of raccoons showing aggressive and disoriented behaviour, a common trait of distemper.

“It is very important that residents who encounter raccoons showing bizarre behaviour be very cautious” said animal control officer for Whitchurch-Stouffville Connie Arnone “Any dog who has close encounters with a diseased raccoon, may become infected.”

The disease may be lethal to dogs if they are not vaccinated for the disease. Please keep your pet’s vaccinations up-to-date.

Raccoons displaying bizarre behaviour, including disorientation, aggression and seizures, could be infected. Diseased raccoons may also be more likely to approach people or sleep in public places. The virus affects the respiratory, gastrointestinal and nervous systems of canine mammals such as dogs, raccoons and skunks. It’s transmitted through discharges from runny noses or tearing eyes, as well as through urine or feces. The disease does not affect cats.

The disease is not transmittable to humans.

According to Arnone, the most common area in Stouffville for reported cases is south of Main Street and east of Memorial Park.

“There have been cases reported in the Thicketwood Boulevard area and around Summitview Public School” Arnone said. There have been reported cases of property damage in the area from raccoons, however there have been no reports of injuries.

“We expect the number of cases of Canine Distemper in the area to remain level or possibly increase over the coming months,” Arnone said.

Residents are reminded to never leave their dog unattended and to always have them on a leash. All dogs in Whitchurch-Stouffville should be vaccinated and have a dog license issued by the Town. Dog tags are \$37 and can be purchased at the Town or local pet stores.

To avoid being bitten, people should not approach a raccoon. Do not feed raccoons and make sure all garbage, recycling bins and green bins are stored securely. Raccoons can become domesticated over a period of time.

To prevent raccoons living on or near their property, residents should keep their garage doors closed as much as possible, and close off areas around your deck where raccoons can create a living space.

If you encounter a raccoon displaying the Canine Distemper Virus, call Animal Control Services at 1-855-898-8605. Please do not call the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (OSPCA), a local veterinarian or the Town. Animal Control has the proper measures in place to deal with such cases.

Please refer to the Town's website at [townofws.ca](http://townofws.ca) for more information.

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