

Rabies Vaccine Bait Drop

May 2026

The rabies vaccine bait drop is an initiative of the United States Department of Agriculture to help prevent rabies in wildlife. Rabies is a deadly viral disease of the brain that infects mammals.

Rabies vaccine is wrapped in sweet-scented bait attractive to raccoons and skunks. Starting May 2, 2026, about 915,700 of these quarter-sized blister packs will be distributed across Vermont. Baits will be dropped from low-flying aircraft in rural areas and placed by hand in more densely populated areas.

Learn more about rabies in Vermont at HealthVermont.gov/Rabies.

If you need help accessing or understanding this information, contact AHS.VDHIDEpiRabies@vermont.gov.



Counties and Towns

Rabies vaccine bait will be distributed in:

- **Addison County:** Bristol, Ferrisburgh, Lincoln, Monkton, New Haven, Panton, Starksboro, Vergennes, Waltham
- **Caledonia County:** Barnet, Burke, Danville, Groton, Hardwick, Kirby, Lyndon, Newark, Peacham, Ryegate, Sheffield, Stannard, St. Johnsbury, 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, Lunenberg, Maidstone, Norton, Victory, Warner's Grant, Warren Gore
- **Franklin County:** Bakersfield, Berkshire, Enosburg, Fairfax, Fairfield, Fletcher, Franklin, Georgia, Highgate, Montgomery, Richford, Sheldon, St. Albans, Swanton
- **Grand Isle County:** Alburgh, Grand Isle, Isle La Motte, North Hero, South Hero



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802-863-7200



- **Lamoille County:** Belvidere, Cambridge, Eden, Elmore, Hyde Park, Johnson, Morrisville, Stowe, Waterville, Wolcott
- **Orange County:** Newbury, Orange, Topsham, Williamstown
- **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, Warren, Waterbury, Woodbury, Worcester

Frequently Asked Questions

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

This bait drop will begin in May. Timing and duration depend on weather conditions and other factors. The air drop will take several days, and hand placement can take up to two weeks. Dates and locations of the rabies bait drop are publicized in advance through local media.

Will this project get rid of rabies?

It is designed to help reduce the likelihood of wildlife getting the disease and eventually eliminate rabies in the United States. The increased frequency and geographic scope – now twice yearly among 10 counties – of these bait drops will help protect people and domestic animals who may encounter wildlife. It is also important for people to take precautions against rabies: vaccinate pets (especially cats and dogs) and livestock, keep your distance from wild animals, and call your doctor right away if you are bitten or if you get animal saliva in an open wound, eyes, nose or mouth.

Who is conducting this project?

The project is an interstate/international cooperative effort. The project is directed by the U.S. 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 containing vaccine and 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?

When an animal bites into one of the baits, vaccine releases into their mouth and they develop immunity from rabies. Humans and pets cannot get rabies from contact with the bait but are asked to leave the bait undisturbed if they encounter it. If contact with bait occurs, the contact area should be immediately washed with warm water and soap. Each bait carries a toll-free number that people can call if they have additional questions concerning bait contact. 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 but will target raccoons and other rabies vector species already utilizing the property.

How long do the baits last in the environment?

Most baits are eaten within four days, and almost all baits are gone in one week. Any remaining baits will dissolve in the environment, exposing the vaccine packet. Sunlight and air will inactivate the vaccine

Can I get bait to spread around my property?

We're sorry, no, the vaccine baits are not available for personal use or to vaccinate pets. This project must be conducted in a controlled and scientific manner. The bait is an experimental use product approved by the U.S. Department of Agriculture only for use in wildlife. Pets and livestock may only be vaccinated by a veterinarian.

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

No. Every raccoon bite or scratch must be considered a potential rabies exposure. Call your doctor right away if you are bitten or get wild animal saliva in an open wound, eyes, nose or mouth.

What should I do if I find a bait?

If you find a bait, do not disturb it and 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 (toll free in Vermont) to report it.

Questions?

Call the Vermont Rabies Hotline at 1-800-4-RABIES (1-800-472-2437)