Rabies Prevention!

Provided by: Veterinary Technician, SPC Donte D. Jennings

Even if you are not a pet owner, you have probably heard of rabies. But many people are not familiar with how the virus affects them or their pets. Rabies is a fatal zoonotic virus, meaning, it can be passed from animals to humans and affects the nervous system of mammals, causing inflammation of the brain. It is spread through the saliva of infected animals by either bites or scratches and can also be contracted if saliva comes in contact with the eyes, nose, or mouth. Annually, rabies causes around 59,000 deaths of humans worldwide. Once symptoms develop, rabies is 100% fatal.

Canines are thought to be the main carriers of the rabies virus, however, this is not the case, largely due to effective control strategies within the United States that encourages pet owners to vaccine against this deadly virus. There is also an effective rabies post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) vaccination series for people who come in contact with stray animals, or a animal whose vaccination status cannot be verified.

There has been an increase in wildlife species such as bats and raccoons carrying the virus. Between 1960 and 2018 there were 125 human rabies cases reported in the United States with 70% of those cases attributed to bats (Pieracci et al., 2019). Here in Texas, bats are the #1 carrier of rabies. On JBSA Ft Sam Houston, we have at least one bat per year that has tested positive. The most recent was September 2019.

How should rabies be prevented?

The easiest and simplest way to prevent rabies is to not get bitten. There are precautions you can take to avoid getting bit or scratched by unknown animals such as not approaching wildlife or unattended dogs, not disturbing animals while they are sleeping or eating, and never attempting to break up a fight between two animals by interjecting yourself between them. If you are ever bitten or scratched by an animal, please seek medical aid at your nearest hospital for treatment and possible PEP, as rabies can be treated after a recognized exposure. In the United States on average 337,103 patients are seen each year at emergency departments for dog bites (Loder, 2019). If you are a pet owner, make sure your animal is up to date on its rabies vaccination. Vaccination contributes to the overall reduction in spread of the rabies virus.

Resources/references:

The Outdoor Adventure Center at Lackland takes park (Stillman, Upson, Lion and Stapleton) reservations, administration paperwork for the Auto Resale Lot, RV Storage Lot, Riding Stable payments and schedules Off-base Trips. The grounds surrounding Outdoor Recreation have over 5K of walking and running trails and a Paintball Course. Outdoor Recreation also hosts several off-base trips and programs, which includes motorcycle rides, skydiving, fishing trips, boogie boarding trips, and Natural Bridge Caverns zip lining and challenge course. Outdoor Recreation offers a large variety of rental equipment like camping gear, rentals for parties, watercrafts and more.

Ph: (210) 925-5532/ (210) 925-5533

The JBSA-Camp Bullis Rod-n-Gun Recreation Center (RNGRC) has everything needed for an outdoor sporting activities. Customers can enjoy the sportsman’s range, archery range, RV storage, hunting rentals/information and lodging/park/grill rentals. Daily fees are required to use both the Sportsman’s Range and the Archery Range. The RNGRC also offers license to carry classes twice a month. Call the center for more information.

Ph: (210) 295-7577/7529

The Community Services Mall on Randolph is where patrons can check out rental equipment, make reservations for Eberle Park, fill out paperwork for the POV Resale Lot, reserve a spot for an RV in RV Storage Lot and stop by the Frame shop to have precious memories preserved in custom made frames. The ITT office is also located inside the CSM.

Ph: (210) 652-5142

From tents to trailers, boats to bikes, The JBSA-FSH Outdoor Recreation Center (ORC) has everything needed for an outdoor adventure, fishing trip or family reunion! The ORC is the place to go for information on the RV Storage Lot or the Used Car Display Lot (Lemon Lot). Located on W.W. White Road, Salado Park is the perfect place for birthdays, organization days and picnics.

Ph: (210) 221-5224/ 221-5225