



NORTH TEXAS WILDLIFE CENTER

rescue ❖ rehabilitate ❖ release

RACCOONS WITH DISTEMPER

- Raccoons can acquire canine distemper which is a viral disease that can affect foxes, coyotes, skunks, and unvaccinated dogs. The disease does not affect humans.
- **The disease is more likely to occur when raccoon populations are concentrated.** Wildlife biologists note that it seems to run in cycles of 5-7 years.
- Distemper is always present in the environment.
- Symptoms of distemper may include discharge from the nose and eyes, a rough coat of fur, emaciated or thin, and unusual behavior such as disorientation, wandering aimlessly. The disease is progressive- symptoms worsen with time. Distemper is not the same as rabies although some symptoms make look similar.
- The disease is spread when animals have direct contact with body fluids or droppings from an infected animal.
- **The best prevention for dogs is to make sure they are vaccinated. Contact your vet to make sure your dog's vaccines are current.**
- Keep children and pets away from sick raccoons. As the disease progresses, the animal may appear calm but can become aggressive if approached too closely.
- To discourage raccoons, remove attractants from your yard:
 - Feed pets indoors. If you feed outdoors, bring in feeding bowls immediately after pets have eaten.
 - Secure garbage. Double bag food leftovers and tie tightly. Use a bungee cord to limit access to the bin. Put garbage bins in the closed garage or shed if possible.
 - If you have a compost bin with fruit and vegetable scraps, fully secure or enclose it so raccoons cannot access it.
- Sick raccoons may pass through your yard and move on. If a raccoon dies in your yard, contact local animal services for a deceased animal pick up.

PLEASE DO NOT FEED RACCOONS! Providing artificial food sources may lead to unnaturally large concentrations of animals and increase the spread of the disease.

For questions regarding a raccoon exhibiting concerning behavior, contact your local animal services or North Texas Wildlife Center at 469-901-9453.

