

I Adopted a Pet with a Wound of Unknown Origin

"I adopted a pet with a wound of unknown origin." That's a heavy sentence. But what does it mean for you, the adopter? What does it mean for your new pet?

A wound of unknown origin means that when your pet arrived at MHHS, there was evidence consistent with a bite from another animal. Since MHHS does not know the health status of the animal that bit them, you will need to keep an extra eye on your new pet. Your new pet has been vaccinated for rabies, but may potentially have been infected prior to vaccination.

Your pet will stay as part of our foster program throughout the quarantine of the wound of unknown origin. This is to ensure that if anything were to happen during this period, MHHS would be able to provide medical care. To do so, this requires you to be in regular touch with the staff at MHHS to provide updates on the health of your new pet.

A little background on rabies

Rabies is a disease that has been documented in animal welfare for thousands of years. According to the Veterinary Information Network (VIN), an animal becomes infected with rabies when they come in contact with infected mucous membranes. Despite being seen as an "animal disease," approximately 55,000 people die from rabies annually.

Once symptoms begin to present, rabies is virtually untreatable. "In dogs, typical incubation periods are 21-80 days. In cats, it's 28-42 days." (VIN) Death can occur from rabies within 10 days of exposure. Symptoms of rabies include drastic personality changes, no fear of obvious threats, hallucinations, and throat paralysis (causing "foaming at the mouth").

This is why keeping up with rabies vaccination is imperative to your pet's health, and why MHHS wants to keep track of animals that may have potentially infected bites. It is also why many municipalities require rabies vaccination during the animal licensing procedure.

What are your responsibilities now?

As a pet owner of an animal with a wound of unknown origin, it is your responsibility to keep track of your pet's health. It is requested that you quarantine your new pet from any other animals throughout the foster period to ensure no potential spread of disease. Since rabies can take so long to present, MHHS prefers to have animals in loving homes, rather than waiting out the quarantine in the stressful shelter. This will allow you to bond with your new pet and create wonderful memories together.

MHHS will have a member of its team reach out regularly to check on the health status of your new pet. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to reach out at community-relations@mohawkhumane.org.

