

# Your Pet's 10-Day Confinement

## Why is my pet confined for 10 days?

When a cat or dog bites or attacks a person or another animal, there is a very small chance it could have rabies, a deadly virus. **Iowa law requires a 10-day confinement so your pet can be watched closely for signs of illness** (Iowa Code §351.39).

If your pet stays healthy for the full 10 days, it did not have rabies at the time of the bite or attack. If your pet becomes sick during this confinement period, it may have rabies, and anyone exposed during the original incident may need prompt medical treatment to prevent death.

Even though the risk is low, this confinement period is an **important and mandatory safeguard**.

For more information about rabies, visit the [rabies page](https://hhs.iowa.gov/rabies) of the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (Iowa HHS) website (<https://hhs.iowa.gov/rabies>).

## What happens during the next 10 days?

Your dog, cat, or ferret will be kept at a location chosen by your local rabies authority (Iowa Code §351.36). During confinement you must follow any instructions they give. Your pet will be observed for signs such as worsening illness, loss of appetite, unusual behavior, or increased aggression. If your pet shows these signs, it will be evaluated and, if needed, tested to see if it could have spread rabies.

## What happens if I don't follow rabies instructions?

Not following the local rabies authority's rules can lead to your pet being impounded (Iowa Code §351.39) and possible misdemeanor charges (Iowa Code §351.43). Under Iowa law, a dog owner can also be held liable for injuries caused by their dog (Iowa Code §351.28). This could include costs for post exposure rabies treatment if the proper steps are not taken to rule out rabies. Completing the 10 day confinement is the safest and simplest way to protect everyone.

## How can I find the contact information for my local rabies authority?

To find contact information for your local rabies authority, visit the Iowa HHS [rabies webpage](https://hhs.iowa.gov/rabies) (<https://hhs.iowa.gov/rabies>).

Click "Veterinarians," and select "Animal Confinement." Then, open the Statewide Points of Contact for Animal Rabies Quarantine Enforcement list to find contact information for the rabies authority serving your area.