

MARCH 2026

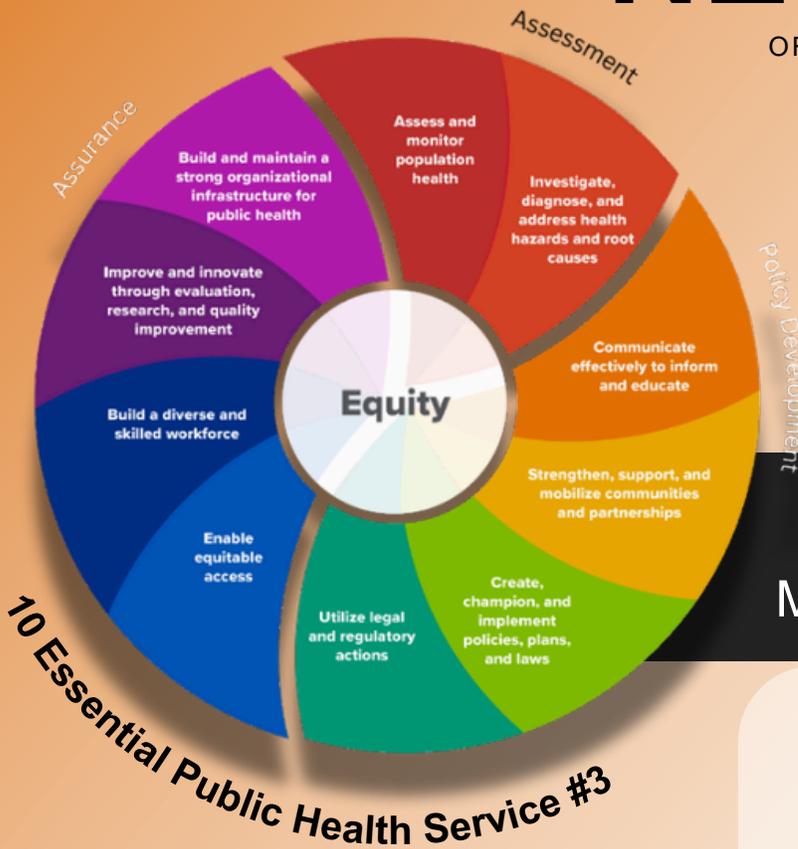
NEWSLETTER

OF THE APPLETON PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

IN THIS ISSUE:

Rabies Program & Partners in Prevention

Meet Britt



VISION: Health for all, together.

MISSION: Facilitate equitable community wellbeing through education, health promotion, and response to public health needs.

Rabies Program & Partners in Prevention

Rabies infections in humans in the United States are rare, but rabies has not disappeared. In fact, rabies remains almost 100% fatal once symptoms appear in humans or in animals. The good news is that it is entirely preventable through animal vaccination and timely medical treatment after an exposure, known as Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP). The Appleton Health Department works year-round with partners and residents to ensure our community stays protected.

Strong Partnerships Protect Public Health

Preventing rabies in humans, pets, and livestock requires coordinated response and surveillance. The Health Department collaborates closely with the Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene for rabies testing, with counties across Wisconsin, and locally with the Appleton Police Department and area veterinary clinics. When a potential exposure occurs, often involving bats or other wildlife, rapid communication ensures that animals are tested promptly and residents receive appropriate follow-up care.

City ordinance requires that all animal bites or scratches to a person or another animal within Appleton be immediately reported to the Police Department. This reporting requirement ensures Appleton Health Department staff collaborate with police and residents to assess risk, coordinate quarantine when necessary, and guide exposed individuals in seeking medical evaluation.

Licensing and Vaccination: Our First Line of Defense

Rabies prevention starts with responsible pet ownership. In Appleton, licenses and rabies vaccinations are required for all dogs and cats by five months of age. Ferrets must also be vaccinated by five months. Licenses must be renewed annually, and pets must wear license and rabies tags when off their owner's property. Licenses are available at the Appleton Police Department (222 S. Walnut St.). A valid rabies certificate from a licensed veterinarian is required, along with proof of spay or neuter to qualify for the reduced fee.

Rabies Program continued

What Residents Can Do

“Rabies is a preventable disease through vaccination,” said Dr. Yvonne Bellay, humane program veterinarian with the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection Division of Animal Health. “Vaccination for pets should be done any time after around three months of age and then again one year later. After these two shots your veterinarian will develop a vaccination plan for your pet that complies with local laws.”



Rabies prevention steps include:

- Vaccinate all pets, including indoor-only pets.
- Enjoy wildlife from a distance.
- Secure garbage and avoid leaving pet food outdoors.
- Keep pets indoors or supervised on a leash or in a fenced yard.
- Bat-proof your home and safely capture any bat found indoors for testing.

If you suspect a person or another animal has been exposed to rabies, report it to the Appleton Police Department as soon as possible.

Through partnership, surveillance, education, and community responsibility, Appleton continues to prevent rabies and protect residents from this deadly, but preventable, disease.

Meet Britt

Britt Schuldes serves as the Appleton Health Department’s Environmental Health Specialist in charge of the Rabies Program, bringing over 30 years of humane officer experience and enforcement to the role. She reviews every reported bite incident, whether an animal bites a person or another animal, carefully assessing domestic and wild animal exposures, police reports, State Hygiene Lab results, county reports, and suspected rabies risks.

Rabies is a preventable but fatal disease once symptoms begin, and Britt takes that responsibility seriously. She guides residents, healthcare providers, and veterinarians through next steps when an exposure occurs, explaining testing and quarantine processes for animals and treatment recommendations for bite victims with clarity and compassion. She is a strong advocate for prevention and regularly reminds pet owners to keep rabies vaccinations and licenses up to date to protect both their families and the broader community.

What stands out most about Britt is her commitment to people. After a bite incident, she makes it a priority to personally connect with those affected, answering questions, sharing results promptly, and ensuring they feel supported during a stressful time. Her thoughtful communication and dedication help turn moments of uncertainty into reassurance and clarity.

Beyond rabies response, Britt dedicates significant time to educating retail food business operators on safe and compliant practices. She enjoys building practical, respectful partnerships that help establishments operate confidently while protecting public health. Outside of work Britt spends as much time as she can with her dogs, being outside, and is very involved in the Golden Retriever Rescue of Wisconsin.

Resources

[Board of Health Calendar](#)
[DATCP Rabies Awareness](#)



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

