



Renfrew County and District Health Unit
"Optimal Health for All in Renfrew County and District"

For Immediate Release

(Pembroke, Ontario, May 5, 2025)

Yellow is the Colour of Caution in RCDHU's Animal Bite Awareness Campaign

Yellow is the colour of caution on traffic lights, and it is also a warning sign to give space to dogs and other animals that need it.

For the third year in a row, Renfrew County and District Health Unit (RCDHU) is encouraging the use of a yellow ribbon (or bandana, bow, or similar marker) tied to a dog's leash or collar to remind people to give the animal space. This is part of RCDHU's awareness campaign to reduce the number of animal bites in the region. In addition to the potential for injury, animal bites carry a risk of exposure to rabies, often requiring rabies vaccinations for the person who is bitten or a confinement period for the animal involved.

People exposed to animal bites and scratches have been steadily on the rise. "While the risk of acquiring rabies from a domestic animal is low, such events can be traumatic and can create a lot of inconvenience for the owner and the person bitten, and these situations can be avoided," states David Tantalo, Manager of Healthy Environments at RCDHU. He continues, "This campaign aims to reduce unnecessary bites or scratches by identifying animals who need space. Remember, if you see yellow on someone's pet, give the animal space!"

By tying a yellow marker to a dog's leash or collar, pet owners are stating that the animal needs space for various reasons. This could include age, health issues (including recovering from surgery), nervousness, aggression, or training.

RCDHU encourages social media users to get involved in the campaign by sharing photos of their pets wearing a yellow ribbon or marker. Tag RCDHU (@RCDHealthUnit) and use the hashtags #YellowRibbonDog or #GiveMeSpace. Yellow ribbons are available for pick up at the RCDHU Pembroke office and participating pet stores, veterinary clinics and municipal offices across Renfrew County. Click the weblink below for a list.

Tantalo encourages families, especially children, to understand what the yellow ribbon or marker means. "In general, it's best to get the animal owner's full attention and permission before approaching and petting the animal. The yellow ribbon can serve as an important reminder of this."

RCDHU must be notified any time an animal bites or scratches a person. If someone is bitten by an animal, RCDHU recommends recording the pet owner's contact information. If possible, take a picture of the animal or remember specific features, like markings or a distinctive collar. This assists public health inspectors in identifying the correct animal.

To learn more, contact RCDHU at 1-800-267-1097, or visit <https://www.rcdhu.com/healthy-living/infection-prevention-and-control/yellow-ribbon-campaign-rabies-awareness/>.

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