A leading rabies vaccine manufacturer has voluntarily recalled about 330,000 doses sold nationwide after a vaccinated dog contracted the deadly disease.

"They don't know why ... the animal contracted rabies," said Kelly Goss, a spokeswoman for Fort Dodge Animal Health, based in Overland Park, Kan., and a division of health care giant Wyeth. "In the best interest of pet owners and animals, we made a decision to voluntarily recall that product."

The company mailed notices to veterinarians on May 25, and will reimburse them for revaccination, Goss said. Doctors are notifying pet owners to bring in animals for free shots.

Fort Dodge began selling the recalled batch in January 2005. Goss didn't know how many vets bought the problem lot. Fort Dodge tested batches of vaccine with serial numbers issued around that of the affected lot and found no problems, she said.

Animals at greatest risk are outdoor pets and those such as puppies and kittens, who received the recalled medication as their first and only vaccination, said Dr. Steve Marks of the N.C. State University College of Veterinary Medicine in Raleigh.

"If that initial vaccination did not work, then they're ... at risk for rabies," he said.

Notified pet owners should act quickly to have their animal revaccinated, Marks said, but he cautioned against panic.

"Just call your veterinarian if you're in doubt," he said.

What This Means to Pet Owners

Fort Dodge Animal Health recalled rabies vaccine Rabvac 3 TF, serial number 873113A. Your vet should notify you if your pet was vaccinated with the problem batch. You can also check the rabies certificate that you should have received, which lists the manufacturer and serial number.