Woodchucks can also be referred to as groundhogs, gophers, and “whistle-pigs”. They are shy, timid creatures who come into yards after a long winter’s hibernation. The perfect habitat is in a suburban area, with houses, decks, lawns and gardens.

*FUN FACT:* Woodchucks have a unique body temperature range from about 99 degrees and can drop to as low as 37 degrees. Going that low helps them to hibernate in the long, cold winters.

- **Woodchucks seen in daytime:** This is normal behavior, and they are usually active during the day, particularly in the morning.

*If a woodchuck is ACTING AGGRESSIVELY AND CHASING PEOPLE, keep people and pets inside and CONTACT THE CLIFTON HEALTH DEPARTMENT* *

- **Woodchucks Circling or Falling Over:** Woodchucks can get the rabies virus, but they are more likely to get a parasite called roundworm (which creates rabies-like symptoms that affects the brain). This condition is fatal, and does resemble rabies.

*KEEP PETS AND CHILDREN AWAY FROM THE ANIMAL AND THE CLIFTON HEALTH DEPARTMENT SHOULD BE CONTACTED*

- **Woodchucks under shed/decks:** Woodchucks take advantage of spaces where they can burrow to raise their young. In the spring and summer, mothers use this space to nurse her babies.

**SELF-HELP OPTION:** The simplest option is to wait for the woodchucks to leave on their own and then seal off their entry hole with galvanized mesh. It is CRITICAL before sealing it off to make sure no animals are entrapped or babies are left behind to starve.

The Clifton Health Department is a contractual health agency serving the Township of Little Falls.
• **Fear of Woodchucks Harming Children:** Woodchucks are shy creatures who scamper when they are scared. There is no cause for alarm as healthy woodchucks are not interested in children or pets. They are 100% vegetarian. When chased, they will just flee to their burrows in the ground.

*FUN FACT:* A woodchuck’s heart rate, when hibernating, can drop from about 80 beats per minute to about 5 beats per minute, and their breaths can drop from about 16 per minute to as low as about 2 per minute.

• **Woodchucks eating garden:** Woodchucks are vegetarian, and a garden would be their favorite place to get some food.

**SELF-HELP OPTION:** Make sure your garden is enclosed with secure fencing around the entire perimeter. With mesh fencing, once the fence goes up, a woodchuck won’t be able to go into the yard again!

(Visit the link below for more information)

*If you trap a Woodchuck, the only thing an Animal Control Officer can do is release it back on your property depending on the situation. Make sure a wood board is placed underneath the trap. **RESIDENTS WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR AN ANIMAL THAT IS CONTAINED IN A TRAP.** An outside wildlife service can help remove the woodchuck from the area humanely (A fee may be involved). *

Any other questions?

Visit [www.humanesociety.org/woodchucks](http://www.humanesociety.org/woodchucks) for more information.

Or call the Clifton Health Department at 973-470-5760.