

# Bat Bites and Rabies

## *Why are we concerned about bats and rabies?*

Rabies is a disease caused by a virus that affects the central nervous system (CNS). Every year in the U.S., a few people die from rabies disease and most of these cases are caused by bites from bats.



## *How can you get rabies?*

You may get rabies when saliva or CNS tissue from a rabid animal enters your body through an open wound or through direct contact with a mucous membrane (nose, mouth, etc.).

## *What should you do if you come in contact with a bat?*

You can only get rabies from a bat through a bite. If this occurs, safely capture the bat and do not release it until you contact the Health Department. You should seek medical attention and have the bat tested if you:

- Wake up and find a bat in your room
- See a bat in a room where someone who was sleeping
- Find a bat near a person who cannot see and/or tell you that a bat had contact with them (a baby, unattended child, mentally impaired, intoxicated person, etc.)

## *How can I keep my family safe from rabies?*

- Enjoy wild and domestic animals from a distance
- Wash thoroughly with soap and water any wound from an animal and seek medical attention right away
- Test bats for rabies if pets or people have been exposed
- Prevent bats from entering the living spaces of your home, church, schools, or other places where they can come in contact with people and pets
- Keep vaccinations for dogs, cats, ferrets, and livestock current

*For more information visit:* [www.cdc.gov/rabies](http://www.cdc.gov/rabies)



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