

Rabies and Bat Bites

Why are we concerned about bats and rabies?

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



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 your local 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 any wound from an animal thoroughly with soap and water 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



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