

I've Been Bitten - What Should I Do?

Why are we concerned about animal bites?

A person can get rabies if they are bitten by a domestic or wild animal that is infected with the rabies virus. Rabies is a preventable disease but, if left untreated, almost all mammals (that includes humans, too) will die once they start to show signs and symptoms of the disease.



What happens to the animal if it bites someone?

- Healthy dogs, cats, and ferrets are confined for 10 days and monitored for signs of illness.
- Wild animals are euthanized (put down) and tested. There is no known observation period for wild animals.

What should I do if an animal bites me?

Wash the wound with soap and lots of water and seek medical attention. If the animal is:

- A dog, cat, or ferret and is with its owner—Stop right away and do not leave the area. Get the owner's name, address, phone number, rabies vaccination information, etc.
- A wild animal—Try to safely trap the animal and do not let it get away. Bats have small sharp teeth so it is hard to know if you have been bitten, especially if you wake up to find it flying around in your bedroom.
- A stray or animal that runs away— Remember where you were when bitten, what the animal looks like, what direction it went, etc.

Report the incident to the local health department or local animal control as soon as possible.

For more information visit: www.cdc.gov/rabies



5/22

Health Whys

A public health message from

BlueRidgeHD.org

Follow us on
Facebook



VDH VIRGINIA
DEPARTMENT
OF HEALTH
*To protect the health and promote the
well-being of all people in Virginia.*