

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



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