

Bat Bites and Rabies



Why are we concerned about bats and rabies?

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

How is rabies transmitted?

Rabies is transmitted when saliva or CNS tissue from a rabid animal enters a mammal's body through an open wound or through direct contact with a mucous membrane (i.e. through nose, mouth, etc.).

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

Rabies transmission from bats only occurs through a bite from a bat. If this occurs, safely capture the bat and do not release it until you contact the Health Department. Seek medical attention and have the bat tested if you:

- Wake up and find a bat in your room
- See a bat in the room of someone who was sleeping
- Find a bat near a person not able to see and/or communicate that a bat had contact with them (i.e. a baby, unattended child, mentally impaired, intoxicated person)

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
- If possible, have all bats tested 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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