

What if I have a bat in my house?

- Contact animal control for assistance.
- Close windows and closet doors.
- Turn on all the lights if the room is dark.
- Leave the room and close the door behind you.
- Do not release the bat.

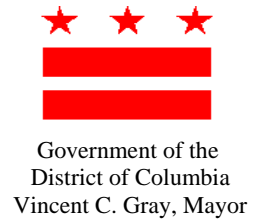
Any live or dead bat that may have had contact with a person should be tested for rabies. When the rabies test results are known, the Department of Health will notify you so you and your doctor can make an informed decision regarding necessary medical treatment. If the bat cannot be found, or has escaped, contact the Animal Services of the Department of Health, and see a doctor as soon as possible.

To report animal bites or exposures, please call:

District of Columbia
Animal Care and Control Facility
1201 New York Ave NE
Washington, DC 20002
(202-576-6664)

For additional information about rabies
contact:

District of Columbia
Department of Health
Animal Services Program
(202) 535-2323



WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT RABIES



**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
ANIMAL SERVICES PROGRAM**

What is Rabies?

Rabies is a fatal disease transmitted from animals to humans, caused by a virus that attacks the central nervous system, causing convulsions, paralysis and finally death. The virus is present in the saliva of a rabid animal and is transmitted primarily by animal bites and rarely by contamination of open wounds, fresh abrasions or mucous membranes.

All warm-blooded animals can be affected by the virus, but it is most often found in wildlife such as raccoons, skunks, foxes, and bats. Dogs and cats may also contract rabies if they are not vaccinated against it.

Rabies is rarely seen in rodents such as mice, rats, squirrels, chipmunks, guinea pigs, hamsters, or in rabbits. Birds, turtles, lizards, fish, and insects do not contract rabies.

Symptoms of Animal Rabies

Marked changes in an animal's behavior are symptoms of rabies. A rabid animal may:

- ★ Be unnaturally withdrawn
- ★ Be unusually friendly or calm
- ★ Be very docile
- ★ Snap at anything in its path
- ★ Appear in the daytime (if it's nocturnal)
- ★ Search for an isolated place to die

Is There a Cure for Rabies?

Once signs of rabies appear, the disease is almost always fatal. However, rabies can be prevented if early treatment is administered. If in contact with an animal with possible rabies, you must contact the health department or a medical facility for advice on rabies prevention treatment.

Treatment includes a first dose of vaccine and another protective injection. Then 4 more doses of vaccine are administered over 28 days.

Tips to Prevent Rabies

- ★ **Vaccinate dogs and cats against rabies as required by law.** All dogs and cats more than three months of age must be vaccinated against rabies. Keep vaccinations current at all times.
- ★ **Keep dogs and cats under control.** Animal control laws prohibit allowing animals to roam unsupervised. Roaming pets are more likely to have been exposed to rabies than those supervised by their owners.
- ★ **Leave stray or unknown dogs and cats alone.** Loose animals are more likely to have been exposed to rabies and to attack others. Keep pets away from strays, too.
- ★ **Leave wild animals alone.** Avoid wild animals even if they appear friendly, and do not coax a wild animal to eat from your hand. Do not fear wild animals, just respect and stay away from them. Very young children can learn this rule.
- ★ **Do not keep wild animals as pets.** Even a raccoon or skunk born in captivity may be a rabies carrier. Local laws prohibit acquiring or keeping such animals as pets. There are no approved vaccines or known quarantine for wild animals.
- ★ **Make your property unattractive to wild animals.** Cap chimneys and seal off any openings in attics, under porches and in basements. Feed your pets indoors and keep trash cans tightly closed.

If YOU are Bitten, Scratched, or have Contact with an Animal:

- ★ Obtain the owner's address and telephone number if possible.
- ★ Immediately wash the wound thoroughly, cleaning and flushing with plenty of soap and water for several minutes.
- ★ Immediately report all animal bites to your animal control agency, police department or health department for follow-up.
- ★ Identify and continue to observe the animal (if wild or stray) to aid its eventual capture, but do not risk exposure again.
- ★ Get prompt medical attention. Call your family doctor or go to the nearest emergency room.

If Pets are Bitten, Scratched, or have Contact with a Wild Animal:

- ★ Call your pet away from the animal.
- ★ Confine the wild animal, if possible. (*Do not touch it or risk exposing yourself.*)
- ★ To prevent exposure of saliva to an open wound, it is recommended that you do not handle pets, touch or examine your dog or cat for at least two hours following the fight.
- ★ If you must handle your pet shortly after a fight, wear heavy gloves and afterwards be sure to thoroughly wash your hands with soap and water. Then contact your doctor or local health department for advice to determine whether or not there may have been any direct exposure to the rabies.
- ★ Contact your local animal control agency immediately for advice about testing the wild animal for rabies and follow-up for your pet.