



## Rabies Awareness

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Animal rabies continues to be a serious public health problem in New York State. Staff at Yates County Public Health is available around the clock to respond to rabies questions and potential exposures. Routine questions and requests for information can be obtained by calling **536-5160** or toll free **1-866-212-5160** during normal business hours (8:00 Am -4:00 PM Monday thru Friday). To report a possible exposure or animal bite after hours, the public may call the Yates County Sheriff's Office at **315-536-4438** and ask for the nurse on call.

It is essential that pet owners make sure that their animals are immunized against rabies, and that their vaccinations are kept up to date. All cats, dogs and ferrets are required by law to be vaccinated at 3 months of age, again at 1 year of age and then every 3 years there after. To help our residents, Yates County Public Health holds free rabies clinics every 3 months. ***For the most current information about clinic dates and sites see following page or call 536-5160.***

### Common Sense Steps to Avoid Exposure to Rabies:

- Avoid contact with any wild animal. Be suspicious of wild animals that are unusually tame or aggressive, especially those that attack your pets.
- Don't feed, touch or adopt wild or stray animals.
- Tightly cap garbage cans. Don't attract animals to your home or yard. Board up any openings to your attic, basement, porch or garage.
- Have homes or cabins bat-proofed.
- Encourage children to immediately tell an adult if they are bitten by an animal. Tell children not to touch any animal that they do not know.
- If a wild animal is on your property, let it wander away. Bring children and pets indoors and alert neighbors who are outside. You may want to contact a nuisance control officer who will remove the animal for a fee.
- Report all animal bites or contact with a suspected rabid animal to Yates County Public Health.



# What to do if Bitten

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## ... By a Wild Animal

1. Immediately wash the wound with lots of soap and running water.
2. Capture the animal, if possible, so it can be tested. Take care to prevent additional bites or damage to the animal's head.
3. Get medical attention. Call your family doctor or go to the nearest emergency department.
4. Call your county health department.
5. DO NOT DELAY IN SEEKING MEDICAL ADVICE.
6. If necessary, a dead animal may be double bagged in plastic and kept on ice, until it can be tested. Always wear gloves, use a shovel and clean the area and tools with one part bleach to nine parts water. Keep the dead animal in a protected area away from people and other animals.

## ... By a Dog or Cat

1. Immediately wash the wound with lots of soap and running water
2. Obtain the pet owner's name, address and telephone number.
3. Get medical attention. Call your family doctor or go to the nearest emergency department.
4. Call your county health department.

## ...Have this information ready:

- Type and description of animal including any features or marks
- If it was a pet, whether or not it wore a collar or tags and where it lives
- How the bite occurred
- Whether the animal has been seen in the area before and what direction it was traveling

**Yates County Public Health  
417 Liberty St Suite 2120  
Penn Yan, NY 14527  
315-536-5160  
or  
1-866-212-5160**

## Rabies Fact Sheet

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**What is Rabies?** Rabies is a deadly disease caused by a virus that attacks the nervous tissue of a rabid animal.

**What animals can get Rabies?** Rabies is most often seen among wild mammals such as raccoons, bats, skunks, and foxes. Cats, dogs and livestock can also get rabies if they are not vaccinated to protect them. Deer and large rodents, such as woodchucks, have been found rabid in areas affected by rabies.

Some animals *almost* never get rabies. These include rabbits, squirrels, rats, mice, guinea pigs, gerbils, and hamsters. They can get rabies, but it *almost* never happens.

There are other animals that *never ever* get rabies. They are birds, snakes, fish, turtles, lizards and insects.

**What are the signs of Rabies in an animal?** The first sign of rabies is usually a change in the animal's behavior. It may become unusually aggressive or unusually tame. The animal may lose fear of people and natural enemies. It may become excited, irritable and snap at anything in its path. Or, it may appear affectionate and friendly. Staggering, convulsions, spitting, choking, frothing at the mouth and paralysis are sometimes noted. Many animals have a marked change in voice. The animal usually dies within one week after showing signs of rabies.

**How do people become exposed to Rabies?** People usually get exposed to rabies virus when an infected animal bites them. Exposure may also occur if scratched by an infected animal or if saliva enters an open cut or mucous membrane (nose, mouth, eye). Many New Yorkers have been exposed to rabies virus by handling their pet after an attack and getting the saliva of the rabid animal on their hands.

**What should you do if you are exposed to rabies?** Wash the wound thoroughly with soap and water and seek medical attention immediately. Contact your doctor and your county health department immediately. Try to capture the animal without damaging its head or risking further exposure.

If an apparent healthy domestic dog or cat bites a human, it must be captured, confined, and observed daily for ten days following the bite. If it remains healthy during this period, the animal did not transmit rabies at the time of the bite. Report all animal bites to the county health department.

If a suspect rabies animal bites and it cannot be observed or tested, or it tests positive for rabies, treatment must begin immediately. Human treatment consists of a dose of rabies-immune globulin administered as soon as possible after exposure. The first of five doses of rabies vaccine is given at the same time, with the remaining injections given one each on days 3, 7, 14 and 28 following the initial injection.

People in high-risk occupations such as veterinarians, wildlife biologists, wildlife rehabilitators, animal control officers, and taxidermists should consider rabies pre-exposure vaccination which consists of three injections of rabies vaccine in the arm, the first two a week apart, and the third 14-21 days later. Periodic single boosters are generally required every two years if the risk of contact continues. A person already vaccinated and later exposed to rabies must receive two booster injections three days apart immediately after exposure.

**What if my pet is exposed to a rabid animal?** If your pet has been in a fight with another animal, wear gloves to handle it. Isolate it from other animals and people for several hours. Call your veterinarian. Your vaccinated pet will need a booster dose of rabies vaccine within five days of exposure. Unvaccinated animals exposed to a known or suspected rabid animal must be confined for six months or humanely destroyed.

**To contact us:**

**Yates County Public Health Phone: 536-5160**

**toll free: 1-866-212-5160 Fax: 315-536-5145**

# Bats and Rabies

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## Did you know that-

- Although bats may be helpful to humans by consuming insect pests, some bats are infected with rabies
- People and animals can get rabies if exposed to a rabid bat.
- Rabies exposure includes a bite, scratch, saliva contact to eyes, nose, mouth or an open wound, or any physical contact with a bat.
- In some situations, it is possible that a bat bite can go undetected, e.g., when a bat is found in a room with a sleeping person, or a bat is found next to an unattended young child.

## What to do if you find a bat in your house-

- If there is any chance that the bat had contact with a person or a pet, the bat should be captured and tested for rabies; if the bat cannot be captured, call your county health department for advice on what to do next.  
*During office hours: 536-5160 After Hours: 536-4438.*
- If you are certain that there was NO contact with a person or pet (for example, you saw the bat fly into the house and never lost sight of it) close the room and closet doors, open the windows and watch the bat until it leaves.

## Rabies post-exposure treatment should be considered if the bat-

- Is found to be rabid
- Is not available for testing
- Was un-testable

**And**

- There was known physical contact with a person

**Or**

There was a reasonable probability of exposure, e.g., a bat in the room with, or a bat found on the ground next to:

- An unattended young child
- A sleeping individual
- A person under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- A person with other sensory or mental impairment

## To capture a bat:

- Turn on room lights and close the windows.
- Close the room and closet doors.
- Wait for the bat to land.
- Wearing gloves, place a coffee can, pail or similar container over the bat.
- Slide a piece of cardboard under the container to trap the bat.
- Firmly hold the cardboard in place against the top of the container, turn it right side up and tape the cardboard tightly to the container.

## Where to get more info

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► **Yates County Public Health**  
536-5160 or 1-866-212-5160

► **New York State Department of Health**

[www.health.state.ny.us/nysdoh/rabies/rabies.htm](http://www.health.state.ny.us/nysdoh/rabies/rabies.htm)

