



## What is rabies?

- Rabies is a deadly viral disease that attacks the nervous system (brain, spinal cord, and nerves).
- Rabies can infect all mammals and is mostly seen in bats, skunks, raccoons, and other wild animals. However, dogs, cats, and even humans can also be infected.
- The virus is in the saliva of infected animals and is spread by being bitten by a rabid animal or getting saliva from a rabid animal into an open cut or mucous membrane (nose, mouth, or eyes).



## Resources

### ODH Zoonotic Disease Program

Phone: (614) 752-1029

Email: [Zoonoses@odh.ohio.gov](mailto:Zoonoses@odh.ohio.gov)

### Information on Rabies

Website: [www.odh.ohio.gov/rabies](http://www.odh.ohio.gov/rabies)

### List of Local Health Departments

Website: [www.odh.ohio.gov/find-local-health-districts](http://www.odh.ohio.gov/find-local-health-districts)

### Guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for Bat-Proofing Your Home

Website: <https://www.cdc.gov/rabies/animals/bats/>

### CDC

<https://www.cdc.gov/rabies/animals/bats/>

### Zoonotic Disease Program

### Bureau of Infectious Diseases

### Ohio Department of Health

246 North High Street

Columbus, Ohio 43215

(614) 752-1029, option 2



Department  
of Health



---

Take the Bite Out of  
**Rabies**



Department  
of Health

## How do I protect myself and my pets from rabies?

- Ensure that all pets are up-to-date on rabies vaccinations.
- Do not feed, pet, adopt, or attempt to move wild or stray animals.
- Reduce uninvited wildlife guests by feeding your pets indoors, tightly cover your trash bins, and bat-proof your home.
- If you see a sick or injured animal, do not touch it. Call your local animal control office.
- Call your doctor if you or a family member is bitten. Call a veterinarian if your pet fought with a wild animal or was bitten by another animal. Report all bites to your local health department.

## What should I do if I am bitten by an animal?

- Wash the wound with soap and water for 10-15 minutes.
- Call your doctor or hospital emergency room right away.
- Call your local health department to report the incident.
- Capture the animal, if you can do it safely, or get the name and address of the animal's owner.
  - If the biting animal is dead, wear gloves or use a shovel to place the animal in a plastic bag in a cold place away from people or other animals and follow the guidance provided by your local health department.

## What should I do if my pet gets bitten by another animal?

- Try to find out what animal attacked your pet. Do not touch the animal that attacked your pet.
- Call your veterinarian immediately – even if you think the wound is minor. Wear rubber gloves and use a hose to wash your pet's wounds.
- Call your local health department to report the incident.
- Capture the animal, if you can do it safely, or get the name and address of the animal's owner.
  - If the biting animal is dead, wear gloves or use a shovel to place the animal in a plastic bag in a cold place away from people or other animals.

## What should I do if I have a bat in my house?

- If you have a bat in your room and do not know if you were exposed, close all windows and doors and leave the bat in the room.
- Call a licensed professional to capture the bat.
- If you cannot reach a licensed professional to capture the bat, put on leather gloves and slowly approach the bat when it lands. Place a see-through container over the bat and slide a lid under the container to trap the bat inside. Securely tape the lid to the container and punch small holes in the lid so the bat can breathe.
- Call your local health department to arrange for rabies testing.

## What will happen if I was exposed to rabies?

- If you were exposed to a rabid animal, a post-exposure treatment (post-exposure prophylaxis) regimen can be started. This will involve a series of shots including rabies immunoglobulin and rabies vaccines over the period of several days.
- Treatment must be given soon after exposure to be effective, although it may be delayed for a couple of days if testing of the animal is available.
- Work with your local health department to identify healthcare facilities that administer rabies post-exposure treatment (post-exposure prophylaxis).

