

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

- Cleanse the wound, preferably for at least ten minutes, using running water and soap.
- Dress the wound with a clean cloth or sterile bandage.
- Consult with a healthcare provider right away.
- Factors to be considered in determining the need for rabies treatment include:
 - Is the animal a mammal?
 - Where is the animal now?
 - Is the animal available for rabies testing?
 - Does the animal have a rabies vaccination?
 - What species of animal was involved?
 - What type of contact did you have with the animal?
 - Case by case consideration should be given when a *scratch* occurs from a potentially rabid animal; or, an abrasion, open wound, or mucous membrane gets contaminated with saliva or other potentially infectious material (such as brain tissue) from a rabid animal.
- Promptly report the incident to your local health department.
- Any animal that may have infected a person through an injury, or by contact as described above, should be tested for rabies or quarantined for observation, when appropriate.

How can I report an animal bite in Columbus and Worthington?

Bite reports can be made by:

Phone: 614-645-6134

Fax: 614-645-7155

Mail: Columbus Public Health
Animal Program
240 Parsons Avenue
Columbus, Ohio 43215

In Person: Monday - Friday
8:30am-4:30pm

An Animal Bite Report Form is available online at:

[http://publichealth.columbus.gov/
animal-program.aspx](http://publichealth.columbus.gov/animal-program.aspx)



Teresa C. Long, MD, MPH
Health Commissioner



City of Columbus
Mayor Michael B. Coleman



rabies

- What is rabies?
- How do animals spread rabies?
- What can you do to prevent rabies?
- What should you do if bitten by an animal?



240 Parsons Avenue
Columbus, Ohio 43215-5331
www.publichealth.columbus.gov

What is rabies?

Rabies is a disease of mammals caused by a virus that attacks the nervous system. Once the virus is present in the body, it moves along the nerves to the brain. The infection that occurs in the brain results in the death of the victim. The good news is that rabies in humans and many types of animals can be prevented by a vaccine. For people who are bitten by a rabid animal, prompt rabies vaccination treatment will protect the person from getting rabies.

How is rabies spread?

The rabies virus is usually spread through the saliva (spit) of a rabid animal by a bite, and sometimes, a scratch. The virus may also get into the body from contact with the saliva or nervous tissue of an infected animal through open cuts and wounds, or contact with mucous membranes, such as those found in the mouth, nose or eyes.

What animals can spread rabies?

Any mammal can get rabies. In the United States, high risk animals (those more likely to spread rabies) are raccoons, foxes, coyotes, skunks, bats and other wild carnivorous animals. Domestic animals like dogs, cats, and farm animals are medium risk animals, but can still get and spread rabies from wild animals. This is why it's important to vaccinate pets and livestock. Rodents and rabbits are not likely to spread rabies to other animals or humans. Birds, fish, amphibians and reptiles do not carry rabies.

What about bats and rabies?



Because a bat bite may be so small that it can go undetected under certain circumstances, rabies treatment should also be considered when:

- A bat is found in a room with a sleeping person.
- A bat is found in a room with an individual under the influence of alcohol or drugs or with other sensory or mental impairment.
- A bat is found in proximity to an unattended child who is not able to describe what happened.

How can I tell if an animal has rabies?

An animal may initially appear normal when it has rabies. Most animals will eventually show a change in behavior, as well as difficulty walking, eating and / or drinking. Near the end, they will act very ill. The only way to tell if an animal has rabies is by testing it in a laboratory, or for some pets and livestock, by having the animal quarantined through the local health department, to see if rabies develops.



What can I do to prevent rabies?

- **Vaccinate your pets!** Cats, dogs, and ferrets should all be vaccinated by a veterinarian regularly. Rabies vaccinations are also available for livestock, and many other animals. You should make sure their vaccinations are up-to-date.
- **Do not feed or handle wild animals.** Teach children that a baby skunk or raccoon may look cute and friendly, but can be very dangerous.
- **Report sick or strange-acting animals.**
- **Do not keep wild animals as pets.** This is dangerous for you, and it may be against the law.
- **Leave bats alone.** Never handle a bat, especially with bare hands. Do not release a live bat into the wild or throw a dead bat away until you call your local health department.
- **If your pet plays with a bat, call your local health department and your veterinarian.**
- **Keep bats out of the house or other buildings by closing or covering holes into the buildings.** Consult with a pest control professional about bat-proofing the building.