

## HOW CAN RABIES BE PREVENTED?

- Teach children never to handle any unfamiliar animals, even if they appear friendly. Call animal control to remove stray animals from your neighborhood.
- Have all dead, sick, or easily captured bats tested for rabies if exposure to people or pets occurs.
- Keep bats from entering living quarters or occupied spaces where they might contact people and pets.
- If you awaken to find a bat in your room, see a bat in the room of an unattended child, or see a bat near a mentally impaired or intoxicated person, seek medical advice and have the bat tested by calling SCPH.



## LEARN MORE ABOUT RABIES

### Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

National Center for Infectious Diseases  
Rabies Section MS G-33  
1600 Clifton Road  
Atlanta, Georgia 30333  
[www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvrd/rabies](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvrd/rabies)

### Ohio Department of Health

Bureau of Infectious Disease Control Rabies Program  
246 North High Street PO Box 118  
Columbus, Ohio 43216-0118  
1-888-RABIES-1 (1-888-722-4371)  
[www.odh.ohio.gov/odhprograms/dis/zoonoses/zoomain1.aspx](http://www.odh.ohio.gov/odhprograms/dis/zoonoses/zoomain1.aspx)

### Summit County Public Health (SCPH)

330-923-4891

### Summit County Animal Warden

330-643-2845

### Akron Animal Warden

330-375-2311

330-375-2181 (weekends)

# RABIES

## INFORMATION FOR YOU AND YOUR PET

## IF YOU SEE A WILD ANIMAL

...especially a **racoon, bat, skunk, coyote or fox:**

- Stay away and keep your children away.
- Keep pets indoors.
- Let the animal go away on its own.
- You may call an animal removal service who may remove the animal for a fee.
- If a bat is found in your home, contact SCPH to determine if an exposure has occurred.

Summit County Public Health complies with applicable federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability or sex.

### Spanish:

ATENCIÓN: Si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al 1-800-311-1232.

### Nepali:

ध्यान दिनुहोस्: तपाईंले नेपाली बोल्नुहुन्छ भने तपाईंको निम्ति भाषा सहायता सेवाहरू नि:शुल्क रूपमा उपलब्ध छ। फोन गर्नुहोस् 1-800-311-1232

SUMMIT  
COUNTY  
PUBLIC  
HEALTH



## WHAT IS RABIES?

Rabies is a virus that attacks the brain and nervous system. Rabies is found mostly in wildlife, such as skunks, bats, raccoons, coyotes and foxes. Pets can get rabies from infected wildlife. Unvaccinated dogs and cats pose the greatest risk in spreading the disease from wildlife to people. Birds and reptiles do not carry rabies.

There is still no cure for rabies once symptoms develop, but the disease can be stopped in people if a series of rabies immunizations are given soon after exposure to the virus. Untreated, rabies is almost always fatal in animals and people.

## HOW DO PEOPLE GET RABIES?

The virus is in the saliva of an infected animal. People get rabies by being bitten by a rabid animal or by getting saliva from the animal into an open cut or mucous membrane (nose, mouth or eyes).

Animals with rabies may:

- Show strange behavior; for instance, wild animals may act tame.
- Be active during the day when they are normally active only at night.
- Stagger, fall over or appear paralyzed.
- Have wounds from fighting with other animals (often on the face and front legs).
- Not be able to eat, drink or swallow. They sometimes drool because they cannot swallow their saliva.

## WHAT TO DO IF YOU'RE BITTEN

- Immediately wash the wound with lots of soap and running water.
- **DO NOT DELAY SEEKING MEDICAL ADVICE.** Go to your family doctor or the nearest emergency room. Call Summit County Public Health (SCPH) for advice.
- If the animal is retained, call SCPH so the animal can be observed or checked for rabies. Take care to prevent additional bites.
- Obtain the pet owner's name, address and telephone number. Find out if the animal has a current rabies vaccination and write down the rabies tag and license number.
- If an animal must be killed, do not damage the head. Rabies testing is done on the brain.
- When moving a dead animal, wear gloves and use a shovel. Put the animal's body in a heavy duty plastic bag and place in a protected area away from people and other animals. If necessary, a dead animal may be kept overnight on ice or in a refrigerator until it can be picked up for testing. **Do not freeze.** Clean the area and tools with one part bleach to 10 parts water.
- Report the bite to SCPH.

## REPORTING A BITE

Have this information ready:

- How and where the bite or exposure occurred
- Breed and description of the animal (color, markings, long or short hair)
- If it was a pet, name, address and phone number of owner

## HOW CAN PUBLIC HEALTH HELP?

SCPH will place the biting dog, cat or ferret under a quarantine, usually at the owner's home. If the animal remains healthy during quarantine, the person bitten was not exposed to the rabies virus. Wild and stray animals are usually tested; unfortunately, this means that the animal must be killed because the test is done on the brain. SCPH can advise you and your veterinarian on how to have this done. They will also know the risk of animal rabies in your community which may be important to your doctor if the animal is not available for testing or quarantine.

## WHAT TO DO IF YOUR PET IS EXPOSED

If you think your pet or domestic animal has been bitten by a bat or other wild animal, contact a veterinarian or SCPH for assistance immediately and have the wild animal tested for rabies. Remember to keep rabies vaccinations current for cats, dogs, and other animals.

## HOW DO I ENSURE THAT MY ANIMAL IS PROTECTED?

Dogs and cats must be vaccinated for rabies before they turn 4 months old. The first rabies vaccination is only effective for one year. Subsequent vaccinations can be good for up to three years. Always make sure that your animal is up to date on its rabies vaccination.