

TAKE THE BITE OUT OF RABIES



► What is Rabies?

Rabies is a virus that attacks the brain and nervous system. It can infect all mammals and is seen mostly in bats, skunks, raccoons and other wild animals. People can also get the disease. Once a person or animal becomes sick with rabies, they will usually die.

► 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).

► How can I tell if an animal has Rabies?

Usually, the first sign of rabies is a change in the animal's behavior. They can become aggressive, attacking for no reason, or they may become very quiet. Wild animals can lose their fear of people and act tame. Rabid animals may walk in a circle, drag a leg, or fall over. Some can not swallow so they are not able to eat or drink and often drool. Animals usually die within a week after first becoming ill.



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

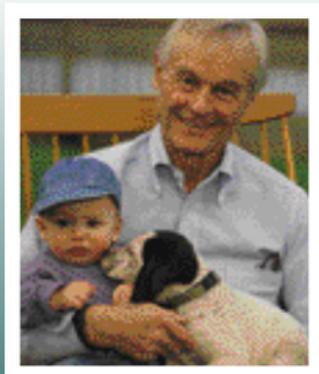
- Wash the wound with lots of soap and water right away.
- Call your doctor.
- Capture the animal, if you can do it safely, or get the name and address of the animal's owner.

► If the biting animal is dead

- Wear gloves or use a shovel to move the animal.
- Put the animal's body in a heavy duty plastic bag and place it in a cold place away from people and other animals.
- Clean the area with one part bleach to ten parts water.
- Call your local health department.

► Can Rabies be treated?

Yes! If you are exposed to a rabid animal, you get one shot of rabies immune globulin and a series of five shots of vaccine. The vaccine is given in the arm. Treatment must begin soon after the exposure to be effective.



▶ How can my health department help?

Your local health department 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 animals and stray animals are usually tested. Unfortunately, this means the animal must be killed because the test is done on the brain. Your local health department can advise you and your veterinarian on how to have this done. They will also know the risk of animal rabies in your community. This may be important to your doctor if the animal is not available for testing or quarantine.

▶ Reporting an animal bite

Have this information ready:

- How and where the bite occurred.
- Breed and description of the animal (color, markings, long or short hair).
- If it was a pet, name and address of owner.
- If the owner is unknown, was the animal wearing a collar or tags.
- Whether the animal has been seen in the area and what direction it was traveling.

► What can I do to protect my family and pets from Rabies?

AVOID contact with wildlife and animals you do not know.

VACCINATE your dogs, cats and ferrets for rabies and keep them current.

CALL your doctor if bitten. Call your veterinarian if your pet fought with a wild animal.

► How can I stop uninvited wildlife guests?

- Bring pet food in at night
- Tightly cover your trash
- Board up openings to your home
- Cap your chimney



▶ Where can I get more information on Rabies?

Your local health department will have information on rabies in your area. You can also call the Ohio Department of Health, Rabies Information line at (888) RABIES-1 or (888) 722-4371

Report all animal bites to:



Ohio Department of Health
246 North High Street
P.O. Box 118
Columbus, Ohio 43216-0118

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