

\* even in the absence of known physical contact, where the bat may have had access 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.



### What if a pet is bitten by a bat?

Whenever a dog, cat or other domestic animal with up-to-date rabies vaccination is bitten or comes into contact with a bat, capture the bat if possible. **(See “How do you capture a bat?”)** Immediately arrange with the Westchester County Department of Health for the bat to be tested. If the bat is unavailable for testing or tests positive for rabies, the pet **MUST** be given a rabies booster vaccination within five days.

If an unvaccinated pet has contact with a rabid or suspect rabid bat, the pet must be euthanized or strictly confined for six months.

### Why should pets be vaccinated against rabies?

Be sure to *routinely* vaccinate your pets against rabies. Rabies vaccinations can protect your pets against rabies. Check with your veterinarian or call the Westchester County Health Department about getting your dogs and cats vaccinated.



## To protect yourself and your family from rabies, it's important to do the following:

\*Keep your pets safe by getting them immunized against rabies. It is not only good common sense, but it is also the law.

\*Never feed, rescue, or handle any wild animals. Avoid strays and pets that belong to people you do not know.

\* Never feed your pet outdoors. Also, secure trash and place pet food stored outdoors into animal-proof containers, because food left outdoors will attract stray or wild animals.

\* Wear gloves when handling your pet during and after an encounter with a wild animal.

\* Always make sure doors and windows are secure and that any small openings that will allow an animal entrance into your home are closed off. This includes screening chimneys, attic vents and air conditioners.

\* Learn the signs of rabies in animals. A change in expected behavior is the most consistent clue to recognizing rabies.

**All animal bites or any contact whatsoever with animals suspected of rabies must be reported to-**

**Westchester County  
Department of Health  
(914) 813-5000**

**24 hours a day**

# Bat Rabies



### 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 from contact with a rabid bat.

-Contact includes a bite, scratch, contact between bat saliva and your eyes, nose, mouth or an open wound, or any physical contact with a bat.

-Once symptoms of rabies appear, there is no effective treatment.

-The majority of human deaths from rabies in the United States have resulted from bat rabies.

## How can someone tell if a bat has rabies?

Rabid bats may show abnormal behavior, such as outdoor activity during daylight; rabid bats may be grounded or paralyzed, or they may bite a person or animal. Not all rabid bats act abnormally, but bats that do act abnormally are more likely to have rabies.

## Where do the most common bats roost?

The big brown bat and the little brown bat are common house bats that roost during spring and summer in attics, behind shutters, and in other sheltered areas of human dwellings and outbuildings. It is important to bat-proof your home by blocking any small openings that will allow a bat entrance into your home, with particular attention to any type of junction between walls, roof and walls, house and chimney, etc., not just obvious entries such as windows and chimneys.



## What should you do if you encounter a bat outside your home?

Avoid contact with a sick or dead bat on the ground. As soon as a grounded bat is found, it should be isolated to prevent further contact with people and animals.

If you can isolate the bat, cover it with a pail, coffee can or similar container and place a heavy object such as a brick or rock on top of the container to secure it.

Call the Westchester County Department of Health to determine whether the bat should be tested. If you cannot isolate the bat, call the Westchester County Department of Health for assistance.

## What should you do if you find a bat in your house?

If there is any chance that the bat had contact with a person or pet, the most important thing you can do is to capture the bat and have it tested for rabies. Call the Westchester County Department of Health for advice on what to do next.

## How do you capture a bat?

The safest way to capture a bat is to use the services of an experienced wildlife trapper or police officer.

*(If you decide to capture the bat yourself, be extremely cautious to minimize the risk of further exposure:*

- \* 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.

## After the bat is captured....

If there was any chance that contact with a person or pet occurred, or you are not sure if contact occurred, DO NOT release the bat. Call the Westchester County Department of Health to arrange for the bat to be tested for rabies. The majority of bats in Westchester County are not rabid; thus by having the bat tested for rabies, you may spare your family from the need for rabies shots.

If there was no contact with a person or pet, as described below, take the covered container outside and release the bat outdoors, preferably at night and away from human populated areas.

## Rabies postexposure treatment should be considered if the bat

- \* is found to be rabid;
- \* is not available for testing;
- \* was untestable;

AND



\* there was physical contact with a person where a bite or scratch or contamination of any open wound or mucous membrane (eye, nose, mouth) could not be ruled out; a bat bite may be difficult or impossible to recognize.