



FAQ's About Bats & Rabies

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- **Why is there a concern about bats?**
 - The most common source of human rabies in the United States is from bats.
- **How do you get rabies from a bat?**
 - Rabies is transmitted when saliva from an infected bat is introduced into bite wounds, open cuts, or onto mucous membranes. Rabies virus is not in bat droppings (guano), urine, or fur.
- **Who do I contact to test a bat?**
 - **Call the Health Department** to help decide if the bat needs to be tested or can be released.
 - Call the Health Department or Animal Control to arrange for testing.
 - Barry-Eaton District Health Department Communicable Diseases: 517-541-2641
 - Barry County Animal Control: 269-948-4805
 - Eaton County Animal Control: 517-543-5755
- **What should I do when I might have been exposed to a bat?**
 - **Capture the bat** (directions are on the next page).
 - **Call the Health Department** or Animal Control for further instructions.
 - Barry-Eaton District Health Department Communicable Diseases: 517-541-2641
 - Barry County Animal Control: 269-948-4805
 - Eaton County Animal Control: 517-543-5755
 - **If the bat was not captured, **call the Health Department**.
- **What if I have a bat in the house?**
 - **Capture the bat** (directions are on the next page).
 - **Call the Health Department** for further instructions.
 - **If the bat was not captured, **call the Health Department**.
- **What is meant by "exposure" to a bat?**
 - An obvious exposure is a bite from a bat or exposure to bat saliva or brain tissue via an open wound or mucous membrane.
 - There are other circumstances when exposure is not obvious. These are some examples of a reasonable probability that exposure to a bat may have occurred.
 1. A sleeping person awakens to find a bat in the same room
 2. An adult witnesses a bat in a room with a previously unattended child
 3. An adult witnesses a bat in a room with a mentally disabled or intoxicated individual
 - **Always **call the Health Department** to help decide if there was an exposure.
- **How often do bats have rabies?**
 - Capturing and testing is the only way to determine if the bat has rabies. Most bats that are tested **do not** have rabies. Therefore it is important to capture and test the bat for rabies in order to avoid post-exposure treatment that might not have been needed.
- **When will post-exposure treatment be recommended?**
 - The first step is to determine if there is an exposure. The second step is to test the bat.
 - Treatment will be recommended when there is an obvious exposure or a reasonable probability of exposure **AND** *the bat is not available for testing **OR** *the bat was tested and has rabies.

CAPTURING AND REMOVING BATS

- Assemble and store a bat-capture kit. Store it in a location where it can be quickly gathered if a bat is found.
- The kit should contain:
 - Leather or suitable work gloves (DO NOT handle a bat with bare hands)
 - Box, coffee can, or plastic container with a lid
 - Piece of flat cardboard
 - Net on a long pole
- Any bat that may have exposed someone to rabies should be captured for testing (see below). If you are certain there was no possible rabies exposure, then the bat should be returned to the wild.
- To Capture a Bat:
 1. Put on leather or other suitable work gloves.
 2. Take the box, coffee can, or plastic container and the flat piece of cardboard.
 3. Wait for the bat to roost on a wall or floor.
 4. Slowly approach the bat and cover it with the container.
 5. Keeping the container flat against the wall, slide the lid or cardboard between the wall and bat.
 6. Once the cardboard is covering all sides of the container, lift the container and cardboard away from the wall.
 7. If no one was exposed to the bat, take the covered container outside and set it on a table or railing.
 8. Remove the container covering and turn the container on its side. Return inside, the bat will fly away on its own.
 9. If a person is exposed to the bat, capture the bat for testing by securing the lid or cardboard to the container so the bat cannot escape. Follow directions for seeking medical attention.
 10. Capture a bat in hard-to-reach areas with a net on a long pole. Then bring net down to a container, and drop/push (wearing gloves) the bat into the container.

****Contact your state or local health department for more information. The Barry-Eaton District Health Department's Communicable Disease office can be reached at 517-541-2641 or 269-798-4152.**

*You can also learn more by visiting The State of Michigan's Emerging Diseases website at www.michigan.gov/rabies, Bat Conservation International at www.batcon.org, or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at www.cdc.gov/rabies.



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