



CAPTURE THAT BAT IN THE HOME

Bat season is upon us, and bats can transmit rabies. Bats are a particular problem because they are frequently found inside homes, resulting in potential exposure to humans and pets. **A bat in a home should be safely collected and not released until the health department has been consulted about the need for testing.** The bat must be captured in such a way as to preserve the brain and spinal column for rabies testing.

While human rabies cases are rare in the United States, the majority are caused by bat-strain rabies. Bat bites are a problem because their bite can easily go unnoticed. In addition to bites, a bat exposure would include finding a bat in the same room as a person who might be unaware that a bite or direct contact had occurred. This would include a sleeping person who awakes to find a bat in the bedroom, or when a bat is found in the same room as an unattended child, mentally disabled or intoxicated person. These situations would be considered exposures and the bat would need to be tested to rule out rabies.

COLLECTION OF A BAT FOR RABIES TESTING

Bats are assumed to have rabies unless proven otherwise by testing. **A bat that is not tested is presumed to have rabies, and an exposure or potential exposure to an untested bat means that post-exposure treatment (“rabies shots”) will be recommended.** Capture the bat pending consultation with the health department. The bat should be kept cool, but not frozen.

The tools you need to capture a bat are:

- Leather work gloves
- Small box, plastic container or coffee can
- Piece of cardboard
- Tape

Once the bat lands, wearing gloves, approach slowly and place a box or can over it. Slide the piece of cardboard under the container, trapping the bat inside. Securely tape the cardboard to the container. Contact the health department or animal control to determine if the bat needs to be tested for rabies and what steps you should take next.

Health Department Communicable Diseases
After Hours

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