



# Get Mad About Rabies!

## ***What is rabies?***

- Rabies is a viral disease that attacks the nervous system of all mammals
- Rabies is nearly always fatal once symptoms appear
- Raccoons, skunks, foxes, cats, and bats are the most common rabid animals in Maryland

## ***How is rabies spread?***

- Rabies virus is in the saliva of infected animals and is spread by a bite
- Being scratched or having saliva come in contact with eyes, nose, mouth or open wounds may also be rabies exposures

## ***Can I tell if an animal has rabies?***

- Changes in an animal's behavior may indicate rabies
  - ◆ Wild animals may act friendly
  - ◆ Domestic animals may become aggressive
- Rabid animals may stagger, drool, or become paralyzed

## ***What if I have been bitten or exposed?***

- Get the name and address of the animal's owner
  - ◆ If there is no owner, remember what the animal looks like
- Immediately wash the wound thoroughly with soap and water
- Seek medical attention promptly
- Report the bite or exposure to your local animal control agency, health department, or police

## ***Protect your family and pets!***

- Have your dogs, cats, and ferrets vaccinated regularly
- Do not let pets roam free
- Enjoy wildlife from a distance
- Teach children to stay away from animals they don't know
- Cover garbage cans securely and do not leave pet food outside
- Prevent bats from entering your home



Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene  
Martin O'Malley, Governor      Anthony G. Brown, Lt. Governor  
Joshua M. Sharfstein, M.D., Secretary

**Contact your local health department at:**

Center for Zoonotic and Vector-Borne Diseases  
<http://phpa.dhmm.maryland.gov/OIDEOR/CZVBD/SitePages/rabies.aspx>