

## 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.
- Report bites and other animal exposures to your local health department, animal control agency, or police.

Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene  
<http://ideha.dhmm.maryland.gov/CZVBD/rabies.aspx>

Maryland Department of Natural Resources  
[http://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/Plants\\_Wildlife/bats](http://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/Plants_Wildlife/bats)

### Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

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## Get Mad About Rabies!

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## 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 biting
- Being scratched or having saliva come in contact with eyes, nose, mouth, or open wounds may also be considered an exposure
- Petting a rabid animal or coming into contact with blood, urine, feces or skunk spray of a rabid animal are not rabies exposures
- The rabies virus is killed by heat, sunlight, drying, and many common detergents and disinfectants
- Animals with rabies may spread the virus before they show signs of disease

## 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



CDC

## Protect yourself and your pets... Immunize!

- In Maryland, dogs, cats, and ferrets must be vaccinated against rabies by 4 months of age
- Rabies vaccines are also available for horses, cattle, and sheep

## Rabies vaccines for humans

- There is an effective treatment to prevent rabies in humans if given promptly after an exposure
- Pre-exposure rabies vaccination is available for people who may have frequent contact with potentially rabid animals, such as veterinarians, animal control workers, and international travelers



## 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 looked like
  - ◆ If you are bitten by a wild animal, try to safely capture or confine it
  - ◆ If the animal must be killed, try not to damage its head
- Immediately wash the wound thoroughly with soap and water
  - ◆ If available, also use a disinfectant
  - ◆ Seek medical attention promptly
  - ◆ Report the bite or exposure to your local animal control agency, health department, or police

## What if my pet bites someone?

- A dog, cat, or ferret that bites or exposes a person will be observed for ten days
- If alive and healthy at the end of ten days, then the animal could not have transmitted rabies at the time of the bite

## What if my pet has been bitten?

- If your pet had contact with a wild animal, do not touch the wild animal
- If your pet has been in a fight with a domestic animal, obtain the owner's name, address, and telephone number
- Avoid touching your pet with bare hands
- Consult your veterinarian
- Contact the local animal control agency, health department, or police

## Be aware of bats

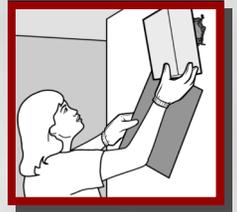
- Most recent human cases of rabies in the U.S. have been caused by exposure to bats
- When a person is exposed to a bat, the bat should be collected safely, if possible, and tested for rabies
- Sometimes it is necessary to seek medical advice even in the absence of an obvious bite wound. If you or someone else in your home awakens to find a bat in the room, or any other situation in which a bat bite cannot be ruled out, call your local health department

## How do I capture a bat?

- The safest way to capture a bat is to use a wildlife cooperator or trapper
- Your local health department or the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) can help find these professionals in your area

## Use caution if you catch the bat yourself!

- Close doors and windows
- Wait for the bat to land
- Wearing heavy gloves, place a coffee can or box over the bat
- Slide a piece of cardboard under the container to trap the bat inside
- Firmly hold the cardboard in place against the container, turn it right side up, and tape the cardboard tightly to the container
- Do not release the bat
- Contact your local health department or animal control agency to determine if the bat should be tested for rabies



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## Bat-proof your home

- If bats are not living in your home, you can bat-proof from September 1 to March 1
- Install window screens and chimney caps
- Close openings greater than ¼ inch by ½ inch
- Your local health department and the DNR can provide more information about bat-proofing and bat exclusion