

MEDIA RELEASE

ERIE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Preventing rabies from bats

Erie, PA — The Erie County Department of Health reminds residents of Erie County that bats can carry the rabies virus.

“Rabies is a disease that almost always results in death, but it can be prevented if the rabies vaccine is given immediately after being exposed to a rabid animal,” said Jeff Quirk, epidemiology research associate at the health department.

People can get rabies from the bite or scratch of an infected mammal (animals with hair, including bats) or if its saliva gets into a person’s eyes, nose, mouth or any wound or break in the skin.

Trap bats and have them tested for rabies, if possible, whenever

- someone is bitten or scratched by a bat
- someone handles a bat with bare hands
- a bat flies into someone and makes contact with bare skin
- someone steps accidentally on a bat with their bare feet or accidentally touches a bat
- bats are found in the same room with an unattended child, sleeping person or anyone who is unsure if they were bitten or scratched

For guidance on how to trap bats for rabies testing, call the Pennsylvania Game Commission at **833-742-4868**.

If the bat flies away, cannot be trapped or if its health (rabies status) cannot be determined within 72 hours, contact the nearest hospital emergency department.

All free-ranging wildlife, regardless of behavior, are considered rabid, including bats, raccoons, skunks, groundhogs and foxes.

For more guidance about rabies, call:

For 24-hour assistance on rabies: Pennsylvania Department of Health at **877-724-3258**.

For domestic animals (pets and livestock): Pennsylvania Dept. of Agriculture **814-332-6890**

For wildlife: Pennsylvania Game Commission **833-742-4868**

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