

What is Rabies?

Rabies is a disease that can lead to death. It affects the central nervous system of warm-blooded animals, including people. It is typically transferred through the bite or scratch of the animal that has the virus in its saliva or, more rarely, by contamination of an open cut or mucus membrane (eyes, nostrils, or mouth) with saliva from the rabid animal.

Prevention

Preventing rabies means avoiding situations that can lead to a bite or a scratch and making sure your pets have rabies shots.

- Do not go by or touch a dog, cat, or any other pet you do not know.
- Do not handle stray dogs or cats.
- Do not separate fighting animals. Keep your pet on a leash.
- Vaccinate your pet against rabies.
- Do not go near or touch wild animals.

Symptoms (signs) of Rabies (in people)

- Headache,
- Fever,
- Crabbiness,
- Double vision, and
- Itching or pain at the bite site.

The symptoms will worsen and include spasms of the throat and the muscles used for breathing, convulsions, confusion, being unable to move, and death.

What is an Animal Bite or Exposure?

- Any wounds of the skin, such as bites, cuts, or scratches (bat).
- Touching any animal's body fluids, such as saliva or blood, and then touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.
- Finding a bat when you wake up in a room, especially with a child who is alone or an incapacitated person.

If bitten or scratched (bat)

1. Wash the wound very well with soap and warm water for 10—15 minutes..
2. Control any bleeding. Put a bandage or gauze on the wound.
3. Seek health care right away for
 - ✓ Proper wound care.
 - ✓ Antibiotics.
 - ✓ Tetanus booster (if needed).
 - ✓ Rabies shots (if needed).



Resources:

Wis. Stats. Sec. 95.21. www.cdc.gov/rabies
<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/rabies/index.htm>

Rabies

Prevention & Animal Bite Care



Forest County Health Department
200 E Madison Street
Crandon, WI 54520
715-478-3371
www.forestcountypublichealth.org



Bite Reporting

All bites must be reported to the Forest County Sheriff's Office's non-emergency number: **715-478-3311**

Pets

- A pet (dog, cat, or ferret) that is current on rabies shots can be quarantined at home for 10 days. These animals must be confined to the home at all times. They are not allowed around anyone except family members living in the home and the vet.
- The pet needs to be checked for signs of rabies by a licensed veterinarian three times. Once on the first day of quarantine, the last day, and one day in between.
- If a pet **is not** current on rabies shots, the pet will be quarantined for 10 days in an isolation facility, i.e., vet clinic, Forest County Animal Shelter.
- The pet needs to be checked for signs of rabies by a licensed veterinarian three times. Once on the first day of quarantine, the last day, and one day in between.
- After the quarantine is up, the pet can be vaccinated against rabies.

- If the pet does show signs of rabies, state statute requires the pet be euthanized and the brain sent in for testing.

Why the 10-Day Quarantine?

When a healthy pet bites a person, there may be a small chance that the animal is in the stage where it can spread the disease. It may not show signs of rabies. In rare cases, the animal will develop signs of rabies in a few days, typically 10.

If the pet stays healthy during the 10 days, this shows that it did not have rabies in its saliva at the time of the bite. The person who was bitten then does not have to have the rabies shot series.

The 10-day quarantine period avoids the need to euthanize the pet that bit to test its brain for the rabies virus.

Stray Animals

A domestic animal that does not have tags.

- If you are feeding and/or sheltering a "stray". You are considered the owner.
- A stray dog, cat, or ferret must be captured and quarantined at a veterinarian clinic for 10 days.
- If the animal cannot be found, the person who was bitten needs to complete the rabies shot series.



Bats (Bite or Scratch)

- Do not get rid of, freeze, or smash the bat.
- Catch the bat without touching its nails or being bitten, i.e., trap it in a sack while wearing leather gloves.
- The brain must be whole and not smashed for a valid lab test.



Wild Animals

Raccoons, Skunks, Foxes, etc....

- A wild animal should be considered rabid unless a laboratory test proves it does not have rabies.
- The animal should be captured and taken to a veterinarian to be sent in for testing.
- Rabies shots should be started and finished unless lab results are negative.
- If the wild animal cannot be found, the rabies series needs to be completed.