



"Inspiring Better Health for All"

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Animal Bites, Rabies, And You

Throughout the year, the Forest County Health Department (FCHD) receives animal bite reports from the Forest County Sheriff Department and the Crandon City Police. FCHD is required under state statute 95.21 "Rabies control program" to prevent and control the spread of rabies virus.

Rabies is a disease caused by a virus that affects the central nervous system. It is spread from mammals to mammals, and mammals to humans, typically through a bite. Rabies can cause death if someone gets the disease and shows symptoms. While FCHD has not had any positive rabies cases, there have been 5 reported cases in Wisconsin as early as February 2026. The FCHD wants you to know that rabies is endemic in Wisconsin wildlife. The primary carriers are bats, skunks, and foxes.

Symptoms of rabies include: irritability, headache, fever, double vision, and itching or pain where the bite occurred. Later symptoms include: spasms of the throat, convulsions, delirium, paralysis, and death.

FCHD asks for your help to keep you, your family, and your pets safe from animal bites:

- Keep your pets up-to-date on rabies vaccinations
- Leave handling of animals to the professionals
 - ✓ Contact Wild Instincts or Northwoods Wildlife Center (715-362-9453) for wild animals
 - ✓ Contact the Forest County Humane Society (715-478-2098) for domestic pets
- Teach children to not to go near unfamiliar or wild animals.
- Never leave a young child alone with a pet.

If you are bitten or scratched:

- Clean the wound thoroughly with lots of soap and water.
- Report the bite to law enforcement.
- Contact your healthcare provider or go to the local emergency room.
- If the animal has been, or can be safely captured, hold on to the animal until the FCHD can be consulted.

For more information visit:

<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/rabies/index.htm>

<https://datcp.wi.gov/Documents/RabiesBites.pdf>