

In Arizona domestic and wild rodents and rabbits are at an extremely low risk for rabies infection since the animals don't usually survive the initial attack from a rabid animal. Therefore, they are rarely tested for rabies unless there has been a human exposure and the rodent or rabbit is exhibiting neurologic signs (nerve, spine or brain function).

4) People handling animal carcasses should wear moisture impermeable gloves.

5) Travelers to foreign countries with endemic dog rabies are advised to consult travel clinic staff or a medical care provider at least one month prior to departing to discuss rabies prophylaxis and post exposure treatment.

#### A rabies exposure includes:

1) Any bite, scratch, or incident in which saliva, brain or spinal cord fluid/tissue of a potentially rabid animal enters an open fresh wound or contacts mucous membranes of the eye, mouth or nose.

2) The animal involved must be considered. For example, a bite from a healthy pet rodent is not considered a rabies exposure, but a bite from a skunk, bat, or wild carnivore is an exposure.

3) People who have had physical contact with a bat are considered exposed. In addition, people in a room with a bat found sleeping, incapacitated, or unable to communicate are considered exposed, unless the bat tests negative for rabies at the Arizona State Health Laboratory.

4) People who have been bitten by a dog in countries that are endemic for canine rabies are considered exposed.

Clinicians and people working with animals can access the Arizona Department of Health Services Manual for rabies control and animal bite management <https://tinyurl.com/y6ho94hr>.

The risk of rabies exposure for both people and domestic animals is increasing. The number of documented cases of rabies in wild animals throughout the U.S. has increased dramatically over the past two decades. Wildlife is the most important potential source of rabies infection. Leave wildlife wild.

Avoid interacting with wildlife and vaccinate domestic animals and livestock.



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**This information has been reviewed by University faculty.**  
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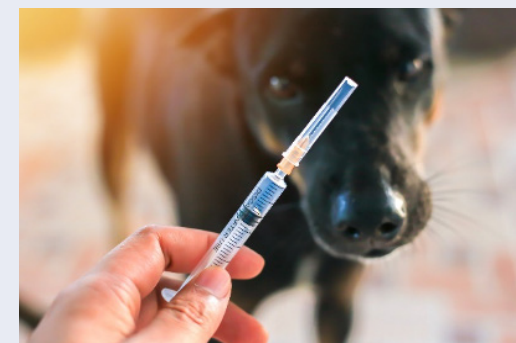
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# Rabies Risk Reduction



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ARIZONA DEPARTMENT  
OF HEALTH SERVICES

Rabies is a preventable disease caused by a virus that affects the nervous system. If an exposed person does not receive immediate medical care, disease and death will follow. **Rabies is always fatal.**

In the United States, most rabies exposures occur when people interact with wild animals like bats, skunks, foxes and raccoons. But other animals like bobcats, coyotes, javelina, cats, dogs, horses, cattle, and many other mammals can carry rabies and infect people and pets.



Rabies is spread most commonly through the bite of a rabid animal that breaks the skin. People can also be infected if saliva, brain or backbone fluid from a rabid animal gets in their eyes, nose, mouth, or through broken skin.

The rabies virus is not spread in blood, urine, droppings or being sprayed by a skunk. You cannot get the rabies virus from the bite of a mosquito, flea or tick.

Annually about 30 people are exposed to rabies in Arizona. Immediate medical care that includes an anti-rabies vaccine saves 100% of people treated.

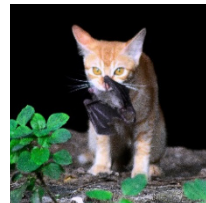
Reptiles, amphibians, birds, and fish are not susceptible to natural rabies infection.

### Rabies risk can be significantly reduced:



1) Most people are exposed to rabies as a result of handling infected bats.

### Teach children to avoid touching grounded bats or interacting with wildlife.



If a person has contact with a sick or dead bat, and it is safe to secure the bat without risking further exposures, secure and submit the bat for rabies testing. Additionally, if pets bring a bat home be cautious, the bat may not be dead. Using thick protective gloves and a shovel place the bat in a box, seal with tape, then contact your vet or local animal control agency ([azdhs.gov/rabies](http://azdhs.gov/rabies)) to request testing of the animal. Your pet may need a rabies booster or quarantine if the bat tests positive.



Do not disturb roosting bats.

2) Keep rabies vaccinations up to date for cats, dogs, and ferrets.



There are also vaccinations available for cattle, horses, and sheep.

If cats, dogs or livestock (vaccinated or unvaccinated) bite a person, the animal should be observed for 10-14 days. Vaccinated pets may be quarantined at home.

3) If you have been bitten, scratched, or had contact with saliva, brain or backbone fluid from a wild or unvaccinated animal, wash the area and wound with soap and water immediately and call a doctor.



Report bites to your local animal control center or county/tribal public health department.

**The Arizona Department of Health Services hotline is 602-364-3676; after hours 480-303-1191.**

**Instructions about submitting bats for testing can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/y6ke4hvc>.**