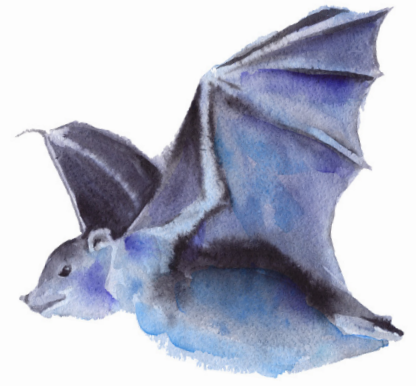


## Handling Calls About Bat Encounters



An encounter with a bat can put a person or pet at **risk of rabies**, and must be taken seriously. What's an encounter? Any known or suspected physical interaction between a bat and a person or pet. What if the caller is not sure? Bat bites may go unnoticed, leaving little or no evidence of a wound or puncture. If they woke with a bat in the bedroom or see a bat laying near their cat, consider uncertain situations like these encounters.

1

### Have caller contact their LHH immediately.

The **Local Health Jurisdiction** (LHH) determines if the bat encounter poses a risk of **rabies** exposure to a person or pet. If a person is at risk, the LHH arranges for the bat to be tested at the state public health laboratory.

- Gather basic information about the bat encounter and caller's contact number. Give this information to the LHH to ensure the caller receives follow-up.
- Tell the caller to not release a live bat or throw out a dead bat until the LHH determines if the bat needs to be tested for rabies.

2

### Make sure pet's rabies vaccination is current.

- Confirm that dogs, cats, and ferrets are up-to-date on their rabies vaccinations.
- Consult with LHH on how to handle confinement and observation periods for exposed dogs, cats, and ferrets.
- For pets with potential exposure to rabies—as determined by the LHH—encourage the caller to make an appointment with a veterinarian immediately for a rabies booster vaccination.

3

### Encourage testing of the bat if only pet exposure occurred.

Bats that have had contact with a pet only—as determined by the LHH—should be tested for rabies.

- Pet owners can pay for testing to be done at **Oregon State University, Veterinary Diagnostic Lab**, 541-737-3261.
- Consult with the LHH on how to safely transport and how/where to have the bat humanely euthanized prior to rabies testing.

**Why is it important to test the bat?** If it tests negative, your pet is not at risk of rabies infection. If the bat tests positive for rabies, the pet owner should focus on observing the pet more closely during the observation period defined by the LHH, even though the pet was booster vaccinated.

#### DOH Resources

- **State Public Health Veterinarian:** Dr. Ron Wohrle 360-236-3369 and [ron.wohrle@doh.wa.gov](mailto:ron.wohrle@doh.wa.gov)
- **Local Health Jurisdiction Contact Information:** [doh.wa.gov/aboutus/publichealthsystem/localhealthjurisdictions](http://doh.wa.gov/aboutus/publichealthsystem/localhealthjurisdictions)
- **Rabies:** [doh.wa.gov/youandyourfamily/illnessanddisease/rabies](http://doh.wa.gov/youandyourfamily/illnessanddisease/rabies)
- **How to Safely Capture a Bat for Rabies Testing:** [doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/Pubs/420-190-BatTransportInstructions.pdf](http://doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/Pubs/420-190-BatTransportInstructions.pdf)
- **Rabies Vaccination Requirements for Pets:** [doh.wa.gov/youandyourfamily/illnessanddisease/rabies/petvaccinationrequirement](http://doh.wa.gov/youandyourfamily/illnessanddisease/rabies/petvaccinationrequirement)

#### More Resources

- **Oregon State University, Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory, Rabies Submissions:** [vetmed.oregonstate.edu/diagnostic/rabies-submissions](http://vetmed.oregonstate.edu/diagnostic/rabies-submissions)
- **Public Health-Seattle & King County, How to safely capture a bat in your home (video):** [youtu.be/Fd8PMAc6T2c](https://youtu.be/Fd8PMAc6T2c)
- **WDFW Wildlife Rehabilitation Centers in Washington:** [wdfw.wa.gov/species-habitats/living/injured-wildlife/rehabilitation/find](http://wdfw.wa.gov/species-habitats/living/injured-wildlife/rehabilitation/find)
- **WDFW Bat White-nose Syndrome Reporting:** [wdfw.wa.gov/species-habitats/diseases/bat-white-nose](http://wdfw.wa.gov/species-habitats/diseases/bat-white-nose)
- **WDFW Living with Wildlife-Bats:** [wdfw.wa.gov/species-habitats/living/species-facts/bats](http://wdfw.wa.gov/species-habitats/living/species-facts/bats)
- **AVMA Rabies and Your Pet:** [avma.org/public/Health/Pages/rabies.aspx](http://avma.org/public/Health/Pages/rabies.aspx)
- **NASPHV Rabies Compendium:** [nasphv.org/documentsCompendiaRabies.html](http://nasphv.org/documentsCompendiaRabies.html)