

# Safely Capturing Bats for Rabies Testing

**Only capture bats** that have had direct contact with a person or pet, or if the bat was found in the room of someone who may have had contact with the bat.

Rabies virus can be transmitted from bats to people when an infected bat bites or scratches a person, or comes into contact with a person's mucous membranes (mouth, eyes, etc.). Bat bites may not be noticed because bat teeth are very small. Any direct contact with a bat, including situations where direct contact cannot be ruled out, should be considered possible rabies exposure.

Bats may need to be tested if found in the room of someone who might have had contact with it (including people who were sleeping while the bat was in the room, young children or incapacitated persons who may not be able to reliably say whether or not they had contact). If you find a bat (dead or alive) in your home, **call your local health department**. The health department can help you determine if the bat needs to be tested for rabies. Testing the bat may be important to decide whether the exposed person(s) will require treatment to prevent rabies.



If you think direct contact between a bat and a person or pet may have occurred, **do not release the live bat or throw out a dead bat, unless your local health department has told you that it will not be necessary to test the bat.**

## TO SAFELY CAPTURE A BAT

- 1 Never handle a bat with bare hands.** Wear leather or thick rubber work gloves.
- 2** If the bat is still flying, try gently striking it with a broom or tennis racket in order to knock it down. You can also try to capture it with a net. The brain needs to be in good condition for testing, so do not smash the bat's head.
- 3** Wait until the bat has landed, then place an empty can, small box, or food storage dish over the bat. Slide cardboard under the container to contain the bat.
- 4** If the bat is dead or injured and not flying, pick it up with a shovel or dust pan and place it in a container.
- 5** Carefully replace the cardboard with the container's lid to securely keep the bat contained, or tape the cardboard over the top. Make sure the top is firmly attached to the container so the bat will not escape. Punch small air holes in the lid of the container using a nail or small screwdriver. Holes should be 1/8 inch.
- 6** Place the container in a quiet area away from heavy human or animal activity. **Do not refrigerate, freeze, or kill a live bat.**
- 7** Contact your local health department or animal control. You will be asked about contact between the bat and people or pets.
- 8 Always keep the bat in the container** until your local health department decides if the bat needs to be tested for rabies.
- 9 If the bat needs to be tested for rabies, your local health department will make the necessary arrangements and provide you with the necessary instructions.**
- 10** If local health department personnel determine there is no need to test the bat, then the bat may be carefully released outdoors.