

## What can I do to prevent rabies?

- Vaccinate your pets! Cats, dogs, wolf hybrids, and ferrets all need to be vaccinated by a veterinarian regularly. If you own livestock, you can make sure their vaccinations are up-to-date.
- Do not feed or handle wild animals. Teach children that although a baby skunk or raccoon may look cute and friendly, it can be very dangerous.
- Do not feed or touch stray animals, and avoid all sick or strange-acting animals.
- Cover your garbage cans, and don't leave pets' food outside where it can attract wild animals.
- Do not keep wild animals as pets. Not only is this dangerous for you and the animal, it's also against the law.
- Do not touch or pick up dead animals.
- Leave bats alone.
- Never handle a bat, especially with bare hands. Use thick gloves, tongs, or a shovel to remove a dead bat, or call **Animal Nuisance Control at 347-4685**. Don't crush the bat with any object.
- Do not let your pet play with bats.
- Keep bats out of the house or other buildings by closing or covering the attic or other dark sheltered areas. Put screens on the windows and attic openings.
- Do not maintain "bat houses" near your home.

### Shasta County Public Health

2650 Breslauer Way

Redding, CA 96001

(530) 225-5591 or (800) 971-1999

[www.shastapublichealth.net](http://www.shastapublichealth.net)

### Regional Offices

2101 Howard St., Anderson, CA 96007

(530) 229-8200

37491 Enterprise Dr., Ste D, Burney, CA 96013

(530) 335-6700

1550 Locust St., Shasta Lake, CA 96019

(530) 229-8444

### Animal Control Agencies

Redding Animal Regulation

7449 Eastside Rd., Redding, CA 96001

(530) 241-2550

Shasta County Sheriff Animal Regulation

2690 Radio Lane, Redding, CA 96001

(530) 245-6065

Anderson Police Department, Animal Control

2220 North St., Anderson, CA 96007

(530) 378-6624

City of Shasta Lake Animal Control

1650 Stanton Dr., Shasta Lake, CA 96019

(530) 275-7480



# SHASTA COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH

# PREVENTING RABIES



## What is rabies?

Rabies is a disease of animals and people. Rabies is caused by a virus that attacks the brain and nerves. Once the virus is inside, it spreads through the body and kills the victims, if they are not vaccinated quickly. The good news is that rabies in humans, pets, and livestock can be prevented by a vaccine.

For people who are bitten or scratched by a rabid animal, prompt treatment with vaccine will protect the person from getting rabies. Treatment usually involves a total of 5 shots of safe and effective rabies vaccine in the arm given over one month and one shot of another medicine called Human Rabies Immune Globulin (HRIG) given immediately.

## How is rabies spread?

The rabies virus is spread through the saliva of a rabid animal, usually because a rabid animal bites another person or animal. The virus may also get into the body through the animal's saliva into open cuts or wounds, or through the eyes, nose, or mouth, though this is uncommon. Rarely, scratches can transmit.

## What animals can spread rabies?

Rabies is spread mostly by the bite of wild animals. In the Western United States and Canada, rabies is usually found in skunks, bats, foxes, coyotes and woodchucks. Domestic animals like dogs, cats, ferrets, and farm animals can get rabies from wild animals. This is why it's so important to vaccinate pets and livestock. Pets and stray dogs and cats can act like a bridge between wild animals and people, bringing rabies from wild animals into your home.

Most mammals (animals that have fur and are warm-blooded) can get rabies. Birds, fish, snakes, and amphibians do not carry rabies. Although it is possible for rodents to get the disease, animals like mice, rats, and squirrels almost never carry rabies.

## What about bats and rabies?

Bats can be dangerous carriers of rabies because their bite or scratch may be too small to notice. A bat's teeth and claws are so small that a bite may not bleed or even hurt. In fact, people sleeping in the same room where a bat is found, or children who have been alone in a room with a bat, should see a doctor.

## What if I have bats in my house?

If you have to capture a bat, follow these directions to protect yourself:

1. Close the windows, closet doors, and the door to the room.
2. Turn on the lights if the room is dark, and wait for the bat to land.
3. Wear thick leather gloves and cover the bat with a coffee can or other hard container.
4. Slide a piece of cardboard under the can, trapping the bat.
5. Tape the cardboard tightly to the can.
6. Immediately contact your local animal control officer to have the bat tested for rabies.

Any live or dead bat that may have had contact with a person should be tested for rabies. If the test results are positive for rabies or the bat cannot be found, or has escaped, see a doctor as soon as possible.

## How can I tell if an animal has rabies?

You can't always tell if an animal has rabies. When an animal is sick with rabies, it may behave strangely. But a rabid animal may also appear healthy or even tame. The only way to tell if an animal has rabies is by testing its brain in a laboratory, or for some pets and livestock, by a quarantine to see if rabies develops.

## What should I do if my pet or I have contact with an animal that might have rabies?

### If you have been bitten, scratched, or exposed to an animal's saliva:

- Wash the wound right away with soap and water for ten minutes.
- Call your doctor or a hospital emergency room.
- Get a description of the animal that bit or scratched you.
- Call your local animal control officer for assistance. The animal that bit or scratched you may have to be treated for rabies or quarantined.

### If your pet has been bitten, scratched, or exposed to an animal's saliva:

- Try to find out what type of animal bit or scratched your pet. **Do not touch the attacking animal.**
- Use gloves or a hose to wash your pet's wound. **Do not touch your pet with your bare hands.** There may be saliva from the rabid animal still on your pet, even if you don't see a bite or wound. Wash your hands afterwards.
- Call your veterinarian.
- Call your local animal control officer. He or she will know the right steps to protect you and your pet. See the back panel of this brochure for contact information.