

# **Bat Encounters... What to know**

## **Protect Yourself**

Bats are extremely important to the ecosystem, but the presence of a bat in a home, or public building or any contact with a bat, represents a possible risk for rabies exposure and should be reported to MCDH so that the bat can be collected for testing and the circumstances for medical follow-up can be evaluated.

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## **What is Rabies?**

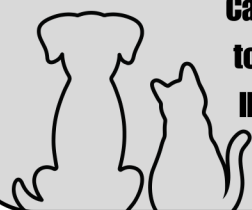
- A viral disease most often transmitted through a bite of a rabid animal.
- Rabies infection results in progressive inflammation of the brain that is fatal if left untreated, it is preventable with prompt medical care.

## **What is a Potential Rabies Exposure From a Bat?**

- If an actual bite occurs (bat teeth are so tiny, the bite may not be noticeable).
- If someone wakes up to a bat in the room with them.
- If a bat is found in a room with an individual who is a child, has a cognitive disability, or is intoxicated or "high".

## **What should you do if you think you were bitten or are unsure?**

- Call MCDH Communicable Disease Program at 815-334-4500. A series of questions will be asked by a Registered Nurse to determine if an exposure occurred.
- If it is determined an exposure occurred, you will be recommended and referred to the closest facility for treatment. Treatment, which is called Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP), includes Rabies Immunoglobulins (RIG) and rabies vaccine.



**Cats and dogs are required to be rabies vaccinated in Illinois. Be sure that your pets are up to date.**

**Not all bats are infected with the rabies virus, but contact with infected bats is the leading cause of human rabies deaths in the United States.**




MCHENRY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
2200 N SEMINARY AVE  
WOODSTOCK, ILLINOIS 60098  
PH: 815-334-4585 (24/7)  
WEBSITE: WWW.MCDH.INFO


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## **Secure the Structure**

The best way to prevent an exposure to a bat is to exclude bats from entering a home or any other livable space. Never touch a bat with your bare hands.

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 Bats are protected under the Illinois Wildlife Code. Permanent eviction from non-livable areas of structures such as an attic or barn may only occur during specific months to protect roosting bats and bat pups. Bats found in the livable area of a home, structure or public building may be evicted at any time.

 Exclude bats by sealing exterior openings, greater than ¼ inch on your home especially around screens, pipes, vents, chimney, fireplace and roof.

 Windows should be screened. Screens should be in good repair. Windows or doors that are not screened should remain closed.

**If you find a bat in the livable area of your home, contact McHenry County Animal Control at 815-459-6222 for assistance. The space should be secured (close door and windows; place a rolled towel under the door; residents and pets should stay out of the room) until you receive further instruction.**

**Nuisance Wildlife Control Operators (NWCOs), licensed by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, can assist property owners in identifying potential bat entry points, and are experts on bat exclusion.**

**A list of licensed NWCOs is available at [wildlifeillinois.org](http://wildlifeillinois.org)**



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