



## Animal Bites and Rabies: What You Need to Know (Public)

### What is rabies?


- Rabies is a nervous system disease caused by a virus. If left untreated, the disease is fatal. Rabies virus is spread through the saliva of an infected animal, which must bite another animal or human to spread the virus.


### Reporting an Animal Bite

If someone gets bitten by an animal:

- Call the **City Police Department** if you're in a city.
- If you're outside a city, call the **Otter Tail County Sheriff's Office**.

Otter Tail County Sheriff's Office

 Phone: 218-998-8555

 Fax: 218-998-8557

### Which animals carry rabies in Minnesota?

- Skunks and bats are wild animals that carry rabies in Minnesota. Dogs, cats, horses, cattle and other domestic animals can become infected. Animals NOT a rabies risk include hamsters, guinea pigs, gerbils, rabbits, squirrels, chipmunks, rats, and mice.

### What do you need to know about bats and rabies?

- Most human cases in recent years are from bat bites. Bats are a problem because often times a bite may not be noticed.
- If physical contact with a bat is made, it should be caught and submitted for rabies. This includes finding a bat in the room of an unattended child or waking up to find a bat in the bedroom.

### What to Do After an Animal Bites you

1. Wash the bite right away with soap and water.
2. See a doctor quickly. You might need medicine or a shot (like for tetanus or rabies).
3. Get the pet owner's name and phone number if the animal is someone's pet. Also ask if the animal has had its rabies shots.
4. If it was a wild animal, the Minnesota Department of Health says it should be safely caught and tested for rabies. Ask Law Enforcement for help.



5. If you have questions about bites, bats, or rabies, call the Minnesota Department of Health at 651-201-5414 (M-F: 8:30a-4:30p).

## Rabies Testing for Animals


The University of Minnesota Veterinary Lab does rabies testing.


- Only a veterinarian (animal doctor) can send in the animal for testing.
- Animal owners must pay for testing.
- Public money does not cover the cost.
- To learn more, ask your local vet or visit:

 [www.vdl.umn.edu](http://www.vdl.umn.edu)

## Questions About Rabies After a Bite?


Minnesota Department of Health – Zoonotic Diseases Unit

 Phone: 651-201-5414

 Toll-Free: 1-877-676-5414

- The public can call Monday–Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

## If a Wild Animal Bites Your Pet


1. Call your veterinarian right away or call the Minnesota Board of Animal Health at 651-201-6808.  [www.bah.state.mn.us/rabies](http://www.bah.state.mn.us/rabies)
2. If you need, contact animal control to help catch the wild animal for rabies testing.


## Tips for preventing rabies:


- Vaccinate your pets against rabies! Horses cattle and sheep can also be vaccinated.
- Do not approach unfamiliar or wild animals. For children, teach them not to approach and to report any incidents where they are bitten.
- Don't keep wild animals as pets
- Avoid abnormally behaving animals.

## More Help or Information

Otter Tail County Public Health

 Phone: 218-998-8320

 Email: [publichealth@co.ottertail.mn.us](mailto:publichealth@co.ottertail.mn.us)

 Open Monday–Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (Closed on weekends and holidays)