



Rabies Facts

**What is rabies, and how is it spread?**

Rabies is a deadly virus that infects the central nervous system of mammals, including humans. It's most common in bats, raccoons, foxes, and skunks. Although rabies is primarily transmitted by a bite, there is some risk of infection if saliva or nerve tissue from a rabid animal gets into someone's eyes, nose, or mouth, or into an open wound. Rabies can only be positively diagnosed by testing tissue from the suspected animal, but it's usually characterized by changes in behavior.

**How a rabid animal MAY behave:**

Unusual aggressiveness or tameness.  
Excessive drooling, "foaming at the mouth."  
Dragging the hind legs, mobility problems.

**When to call the Health Department:**

Wildlife had contact with a person or pet.  
Human contact with pet after pet/wildlife fight.  
Bat found in the living space of your home.

COUNTY	BUSINESS HOURS	AFTER HOURS	COUNTY	BUSINESS HOURS	AFTER HOURS
Chemung	607-737-2019	607-737-2044	Schuyler	607-535-8140	607-535-8222
Genesee	585-344-2580	585-343-5000	Seneca	315-539-1945	315-539-9241
Livingston	585-243-7280	585-243-7100	Steuben	800-724-0471	800-836-4444
Monroe	585-274-6864	585-274-7970	Wayne	315-946-5749	315-946-9711
Ontario	585-396-4343	585-394-4560	Yates	315-536-5160	315-536-4438
Orleans	585-589-2769	585-589-5527			rev. 07/19/05

**If I see a nocturnal animal out during the day, does that mean it has rabies?**

Nocturnal animals DO come out during the day. Often. This, alone, is not a sign of illness. Pet food, bird seed, and garbage can be powerful attractants. Weather changes also affect wildlife.

**What should I do if I see an animal that appears to be rabid?**

Stay away from any animal that's acting strangely, and let your neighbors know about its presence in the area. Sometimes your local police will come out and shoot the animal; however, even a sick animal will often wander off by the time outside help can get there. We do not recommend approaching the animal with a baseball bat or other club because that would require close contact. Crazy as this sounds, a vehicle can be used to run over the animal in some instances. The advantage? No contact.

**If an animal does have rabies, how long will it take to die?**

The infected animal usually dies within seven days of becoming sick. This seems like a long time to be on guard, but you also have to consider that the infected animal may have bitten other animals in the area. Not to alarm you, but it's a good idea to stay on guard.

**How long will the rabies virus remain alive in the body of a dead animal?**

The length of time that rabies remains alive in a dead animal depends primarily on the outside temperature. The virus could die within a few hours in warm weather and could stay alive for months in freezing temperatures.

**Could my dog or cat get rabies from a dead animal that had rabies?**

Yes, through an open wound or by chewing on the carcass. Have your vet administer a booster shot within five days. If your pet is unvaccinated, it must be confined for four months, or euthanized. You're not always going to know what your pet has been up to while outside, so the best protection for both your pet and your family is for you to keep your pet *current* with its rabies shots.

**How do I safely dispose of a dead animal?**

Use care when disposing of any dead animal. Wear gloves. Pick up the animal with a shovel. Then bury it (deep) or double-bag it and put it in the garbage. To kill the virus, sprinkle the ground and wash the shovel/gloves with a 10% solution of bleach in water (9 parts water, 1 part bleach).