



Dog and Cat Management Protocol for Potential Rabies Exposures

Dog/cat bites or scratches a person

- If animal is **not** showing signs of rabies, **instruct the owner to confine (prevent escape, prevent bites or scratches to additional people)** for 10 days from the date of the bite and observe for signs of rabies.*
 - If the animal remains healthy for 10 days, it does not have rabies. If the animal is unvaccinated or not up-to-date, give a rabies vaccination at the end of the 10-day isolation.
 - If the animal develops signs of rabies, dies, or needs to be euthanized due to humane reasons, call Public Health** to discuss rabies testing.
- If animal is showing signs of rabies, call Public Health** to discuss euthanasia and rabies testing.

Dog/cat is exposed to a rabid animal[^]

- **Review:** [Handling calls about bat encounters](#)
- Call Public Health** for observation and confinement recommendations. The length of a confinement period is based upon vaccination history of the exposed animal and is generally 45 or 120 days (4 months). **All** exposed animals should receive a rabies vaccination within 96 hours of exposure.

*Early symptoms may include lethargy, fever, vomiting, and anorexia. Later symptoms may include ataxia, seizures, difficulty breathing, excessive salivation, and abnormal behavior.

**Contact your local health jurisdiction, more information can be found [here](#). You can also call WA Communicable Disease Epidemiology at 206-418-5500 or toll-free 877-539-4344.

[^]Typically bats in Washington state. Bats that are not available or suitable for rabies testing should be regarded as rabid.

NOTE: Public Health should be consulted for management of other pets, such as ferrets, and livestock.

DOH Resources

- **State Public Health Veterinarian:** Dr. Beth Lipton 564-669-0656 and beth.lipton@doh.wa.gov or zd@doh.wa.gov
- **Local Health Jurisdiction Contact Information:** doh.wa.gov/aboutus/publichealthsystem/localhealthjurisdictions
- **Rabies:** doh.wa.gov/youandyourfamily/illnessanddisease/rabies
- **How to Safely Capture a Bat for Rabies Testing:** doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/Pubs/420-190-BatTransportInstructions.pdf
- **Rabies Vaccination Requirements for Pets:** doh.wa.gov/youandyourfamily/illnessanddisease/rabies/petvaccinationrequirement
- **Handling Calls About Bat Encounters:** <https://doh.wa.gov/sites/default/files/legacy/Documents/Pubs/334-427.pdf?uid=6373ce4301877>

More Resources

- Washington Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory, Rabies Submissions: <https://waddl.vetmed.wsu.edu/search-tests/Panels/Test-Details?id=2063>
- Oregon State University, Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory, Rabies Submissions: vetmed.oregonstate.edu/diagnostic/rabies-submissions
- Public Health-Seattle and King County, How to safely capture a bat in your home (video): youtu.be/Fd8PMAc6T2c
- WDFW Wildlife Rehabilitation Centers in Washington: wdfw.wa.gov/species-habitats/living/injured-wildlife/rehabilitation/find
- WDFW Bat White-nose Syndrome Reporting: wdfw.wa.gov/species-habitats/diseases/bat-white-nose
- WDFW Living with Wildlife-Bats: wdfw.wa.gov/species-habitats/living/species-facts/bats
- AVMA Rabies and Your Pet: avma.org/public/Health/Pages/rabies.aspx
- NASPHV Rabies Compendium: nasphv.org/documentsCompendiaRabies.html