

If you are bitten by a dog, cat, or other domestic animal:

- Clean the wound immediately with soap and water. Seek medical attention from a health care provider if necessary.
- Get contact information from the owner of the pet.
- Contact an animal control officer or local health department for guidance and assistance.



Protecting your pets

- **Ensure** your pet's rabies vaccination is up-to-date.
- **Maintain distance** between pets and wild animals. Free-roaming or indoor/outdoor cats have a higher risk of exposure to rabid animals. Dogs should be monitored while outside.
- **Call animal control** if you notice stray animals in your neighborhood that could be unvaccinated or sick.
- **Spay or neuter** your pets to reduce the number of stray animals that may not be cared for and vaccinated regularly.

If your pet has been in contact with a potentially rabid animal...

Call your veterinarian immediately. Even if your pet is currently vaccinated against rabies, it may need to be vaccinated again.



Staying Safe Around Wildlife

- Keep garbage can lids on tight to prevent attracting wild animals, like raccoons.
- Do not hand feed wildlife or keep wild animals as pets.
- If you find an injured animal, don't touch it; contact local authorities for assistance.
- Signs of rabies may vary.
- **Be extra cautious** if you see an animal that is aggressive, drooling, having trouble walking, biting at the air, and/or tamer than you would expect.

You cannot tell if an animal has rabies just by looking at it.

Always maintain a respectful distance from wildlife.



What You Should Know About Rabies

New Jersey Department of Health
Communicable Disease Service

Phone: 609-826-4872

Web: nj.gov/health/cd/topics/rabies.shtml





How is rabies transmitted?

People usually get rabies from the bite of a rabid animal.

The rabies virus is transmitted through direct contact (such as through broken skin or mucous membranes in the eyes, nose, or mouth) with saliva or brain/nervous system tissue from an infected animal.

It is also possible, but less common, for people to get rabies from scratches, abrasions, or open wounds that are exposed to saliva or other potentially infectious material from a rabid animal.

Contact with other materials (blood, urine or feces) of a rabid animal are not considered exposure to the rabies virus.



Rabies exposure

Rabies post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) is a series of vaccinations administered after a rabies exposure. If administered in a timely manner, PEP is very effective at preventing rabies.

PEP should be provided as soon as possible after exposure to an animal that is known to be rabid or is a high suspect for rabies.

If you think you may have been exposed to an animal with rabies, always contact your local health department and a health care provider immediately.

If you are bitten by a wild animal...

- Clean the wound immediately with soap and water.
- Seek medical attention from a health care provider.
- Contact an animal control officer or local health department for guidance and assistance.

Bats

- Bats can spread rabies after minor, seemingly unimportant contact, or unrecognized bites or scratches. **Bat bites can be very small and easily missed.**
- Contact your local health department or health care provider if you may have had contact with a bat.



What is Rabies?

- Rabies is a deadly disease caused by a virus.
- The virus infects the central nervous system, including the brain.
- Rabies can spread from an infected animal to people and other animals.

Which animals can get rabies?

All mammals, which are warm-blooded animals with fur, can be infected with rabies. This includes humans and domestic pets, like cats and dogs.

In the United States, including New Jersey, over **90%** of reported cases of rabies in animals occur in wildlife, most commonly raccoons, skunks, bats, and foxes. In New Jersey, cats account for the vast majority of domestic animal rabies cases.