

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
05/25/2023

BAT TESTS POSITIVE FOR RABIES

STURTEVANT, Wis. – Racine County Public Health Division is advising the public regarding a positive report of rabies found in a bat. The bat was found in a rural area of the county, captured, and sent for laboratory testing. RCPH conducted an investigation and any animals potentially in contact with the bat have been quarantined and vaccinated as appropriate.

This positive result is a reminder that while rabies is rare in the United States, it remains a concern to public health officials because: 1) several million United States residents are victims of animal bites each year; and 2) rabies is commonly found in bats and other wild animals such as raccoon, fox, coyote, and skunk. The rabies virus is usually transmitted through saliva or brain/nervous system tissue. You can only get rabies by coming in contact with these specific bodily fluids and tissues. Rabies is a fatal disease but is preventable with the proper treatment.

Racine County Public Health Division is advising the public of the following:

- Keep your pets up to date on vaccines and keep records of when they were vaccinated.
- Do not keep wild or exotic animals as pets.
- Do not handle wild animals.
- Teach your children not to approach strange animals, including others' pets.
- Any exposure (bite or non-bite) to bats should be discussed as soon as possible with your physician and reported to your local health department.
- If your pet has been in a fight with any wild animals, please contact your veterinarian and local health department.

If you or a family member get bitten or scratched, wash the wound immediately with liberal amounts of soap and water, and report to your local physician, your local public health department during business hours, or local law enforcement after hours.

For more information regarding rabies in animals, please contact your local health department.

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