

Preventing Rabies



What can I do to prevent rabies?



- Vaccinate your pets! Cats, dogs, and ferrets all need to be vaccinated by a veterinarian regularly. If you own livestock, make sure their vaccinations are up-to-date.
- Do not feed or handle wild animals. Teach children that although a baby skunk or raccoon may look cute and friendly, it can be very dangerous.
- Do not feed or touch stray animals, and avoid all sick or strange-acting animals.
- Cover your garbage cans, and do not leave your pets' food outside where it can attract wild animals.
- Do not keep wild animals as pets. Not only is this dangerous for you and the animal, it's also against the law.
- Do not touch or pick up sick, injured, or dead animals.
- Leave bats alone. Never handle a bat, especially with bare hands. Use thick gloves, tongs, or a shovel to remove a dead bat, or call in bat-removal experts. If necessary, call a Problem Animal Control agent (www.state.ma.us/dfwele/dfw/dfw_pac.htm).
- If there has been potential human or pet exposure to the bat requiring that the bat be tested for rabies, do not crush the bat with a tennis racquet or other object.
- Do not let your pet play with bats.
- Keep bats out of the house or other buildings by closing or covering the attic and other dark sheltered areas. Put screens on the windows.

What should I do if my pet or I am exposed to an animal that might have rabies?

If your pet has been bitten, scratched, or exposed to an animal's saliva:

- Try to find out what type of animal bit or scratched your pet. **Do not touch the attacking animal.**
- Use gloves or a hose to wash your pet's wound. **Do not touch your pet with your bare hands.** There may be saliva from the rabid animal still on your pet, even if you do not see a bite or wound.
- Call your veterinarian.
- Call your local animal control officer (through the police department or the board of health) for assistance. He or she will know the right steps to protect you and your pet.



If you have been bitten or scratched by an animal, or exposed to an animal's saliva:

- Wash the wound right away with soap and water for ten minutes.
- Call your doctor or a hospital emergency room.
- Get a description of the animal that bit or scratched you.
- Call your local animal control officer (through the police department or the board of health) for assistance. The animal that bit or scratched you may have to be tested for rabies or quarantined.