

## Things to remember when “Bat-proofing.”

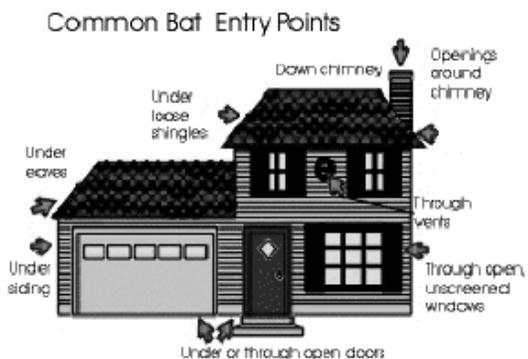
Carefully inspect your home for holes. Any openings larger than a quarter inch by a half inch should be filled in with caulk. This includes electrical and plumbing holes.

Use window screens, chimney caps, and draft-guards beneath doors to attics. Make sure that all doors to the outside close tightly.

Watch for where the bats exit at dusk and stop them by loosely hanging a piece of clear plastic or bird netting over these areas. Bats can crawl out and leave, but cannot re-enter. After all of the bats are out of the opening, permanently close the holes.

Most bats leave in fall or winter to hibernate. These are the best times to “bat-proof” your home.

During summer, many young bats are unable to fly. If you get rid of adult bats during this time, young bats may be trapped inside and die or make their way into your home. For this reason, avoid exclusion from May-August.



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## How can rabies be prevented?

- Teach children never to handle wild animals and animals that they do not know. "Love your own, leave other animals alone" is a good rule for children to follow.
- Wash any cut or bite from an animal with soap and water and seek medical help right away.
- Stop bats from entering your homes, churches, schools and other similar areas where they might come in contact with people and pets.

### Be a responsible pet owner:

- Keep vaccinations current for all dogs, cats, and ferrets.
- Keep your cats and ferrets inside and always watch your dogs when outside.
- Call animal control to remove stray animals from your neighborhood.
- Have your pets spayed or neutered.

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## Rabies, Disease and Vector Control Program

503 Kensington Ave., Buffalo, NY 14214

(716) 961-6800 | [www.erie.gov/health](http://www.erie.gov/health)

If you or your pet come in contact with a bat after regular business hours, please call **(716) 961-7898**. ECDOH staff will determine if the bat will be picked up for testing, and if it will be picked up, then this will occur during regular business hours.

# What you need to know about



# Bats & Rabies

A public health guide from the



**Erie County  
Department of  
Health**



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

**MARK C. POLONCARZ**  
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

**GALE R. BURSTEIN, MD, MPH**  
COMMISSIONER OF HEALTH

## Why should I learn about Bats and Rabies?

Most of the recent human rabies cases in the United States have been caused by the rabies virus from bats. Knowing the facts about bats and rabies can help people protect themselves, their families, and their pets.

**FACT:** Bats, raccoons, skunks & foxes are the four warm-blooded animals that are presumed to have **RABIES** and must be avoided.

**FACT:** About 4% of all BATS submitted for testing have **RABIES**.

**FACT:** **RABIES** is 100% fatal once symptoms occur and 100% preventable with rabies shots.

**FACT:** Laboratory testing of the suspect rabid animal can be done to determine if the animal is infected with the **RABIES** virus.

## What is rabies and how do people get it?

Rabies is a viral disease that infects the brain of humans and other mammals. People get rabies from the bite of an animal with rabies (a rabid animal). Any wild mammal, like a raccoon, skunk, fox, coyote, or bat, can have rabies and can give it to people. It is also possible that people may get rabies if infectious material from a rabid animal, such as saliva, gets directly into their eyes, nose, mouth, or a wound.

Because rabies is a deadly disease, the goal of public health is to first prevent human contact with rabies by education and then to prevent the disease by treatment if contact occurs. Tens of thousands of people are successfully treated each year after being bitten by an animal that may have rabies. A few people die of rabies each year in the United States, usually because they do not know the risks of being bitten by a wild animal and do not get medical care.

For rabies information, visit:  
[www.cdc.gov/rabies](http://www.cdc.gov/rabies)

## What should I do if I come in contact with a bat?

If you are bitten by a bat, or if infectious material (such as saliva) from a bat gets into your eyes, nose, mouth or a cut, wash the area with soap and water and call your doctor or the Erie County Department of Health. **Whenever possible, the bat should be captured and sent to a laboratory for rabies testing.** See: *How can I safely capture a bat in my home?*

**Bats have small teeth that may leave marks that are not easy to see. Because of this, you should get medical advice even if you do not see bite marks when you wake up and find a bat in your room, or if you see a bat in the room of a child or near a mentally impaired or intoxicated person. Whenever possible, the bat should be caught and tested for rabies.**

## What should I do if my pet comes in contact with a bat?

If you think your pet or domestic animal has been bitten by a bat, contact ECDOH immediately to have the bat tested for rabies. Remember to keep your cats, dogs, and ferrets up to date on rabies vaccinations.

## How can I safely capture a bat in my home?

- If professional help is not available, capture the bat safely as described below:
  - You will need leather work gloves, a coffee can or similar hard sided container, sturdy cardboard and tape.
  - When the bat lands, move toward it slowly. While wearing gloves, put the container or coffee can over the bat.
  - Then, slide the cardboard under the container.
  - Tape the lid to the container and punch holes in the lid, allowing the bat to breathe.
  - Do not attempt to kill or crush the bat. The skull of the bat must be intact for testing.
  - If the bat is not alive, it must be refrigerated, not frozen.
- Do not use towels or blankets to capture bats; many people have been bitten through the fabric doing this.
- It is not advised to release a bat that has invaded your home.
- Contact ECDOH for questions and to make arrangements for rabies testing.