

For more information on “bat proofing” your home or cottage, contact a private Pest Control Service in your area or visit the Department of Natural Resources website (www.gov.ns.ca/natr)

How do I protect my pet from rabies?

- The best way to protect your pet from rabies is by getting it a rabies vaccination. For information on rabies vaccinations contact your veterinarian.
- Don't let your pets roam freely where there are wild animals. Keep your dog on a leash.
- Keep unvaccinated pets indoors
- If an animal bites your pet, contact your veterinarian for advice.
- If you're concerned about your exposure to rabies, or your family's exposure to rabies, contact your local Public Health Services office.



How can I protect myself and my family from rabies?

- Have your pets vaccinated
- Never touch wild animals or ones you don't know even if they appear tame or friendly.
- Don't encourage wild animals or animals you don't know to visit your yard.
- Never bring wild animals or animals you don't know into your home or cottage. Never try to nurse one back to health. An animal that is sick could have rabies.
- Close your garbage can lids tightly so that they don't attract wild animals.
- Try not to feed your pets outside, or if you do, remove any uneaten food promptly.

Where do I find more information about rabies?

For more information on rabies, visit the Nova Scotia Department of Health website at www.gov.ns.ca/health or call your local Public Health office.

Rabies



What is rabies?

Rabies is a serious disease of animals that can be passed to humans. Rabies in humans is rare in North America, however rabies is a serious illness and left untreated can be fatal. More than 50,000 people around the world die each year from rabies.

Do we have rabies in Nova Scotia?

Yes. Some bats in Nova Scotia have been found to have rabies. Bats with rabies can infect other animals and they have caused animal death in Nova Scotia, most recently of a household cat in early 2003.

What is the cause of rabies?

Rabies is caused by a virus. It affects humans, domestic and wild animals such as dogs, cats, horses, cows, bats, raccoons, skunks, coyotes, wolves and foxes. The virus is passed to humans or animals through saliva, usually from the bite of an animal that has the disease.

What are the symptoms and treatment for a “rabies infection”?

An animal that has rabies may act differently than expected. A calm, gentle animal may become very aggressive and try to bite, while a wild animal may move slowly and act as if it is tame. The animal may also have trouble swallowing and may have increased drooling.

In humans the symptoms of a “rabies infection” usually appear 3 to 8 weeks after being bitten by an infected animal. Occasionally, symptoms appear earlier (several days). On rare occasions, symptoms have developed a year or more after being bitten.

A rabies vaccine is available to prevent a “rabies infection” in people who have been bitten by an animal with rabies. This vaccine is only effective if given before symptoms appear.

Without treatment with the rabies vaccine, a “rabies infection” causes severe agitation, spasms of the throat, confusion, disorientation, coma and death. Once these symptoms appear there is no effective treatment and the “rabies infection” is always fatal.

What do I do if I or a family member is bitten by an animal?

- Wash the bite wound immediately with soap and hot water.
- Go to a doctor to have the wound checked. Tell the doctor about your concerns, the animal’s behavior, and the events leading up to the bite.
- If you don’t know the animal that bit you call Public Health Services. If you were bitten by a wild animal call either Public Health Services or Department of Natural Resources (DNR). DNR will try to locate and capture the wild animal. If the animal that bit you is a pet other than a dog, cat, or ferret call Public Health Services. Small rodents and rabbits rarely, if ever, transmit rabies. If the animal that bit you is a pet dog, cat or ferret the animal should be watched for about 10 days to see if it develops symptoms. If the animal becomes ill, take it to your veterinarian immediately for examination. You are **not** at risk to rabies if the dog, cat or ferret is healthy at the end of 10 days.
- Bites from bats are the only known source of rabies in animals and humans in Nova Scotia. It is possible to be bitten by a bat and not know it.

- If you, or someone you know of, comes in direct contact with a bat, call your local Public Health Services office.

Also contact Public Health Services if you awaken and find a bat in your room or see a bat in the room of an unattended child or near a person with a mental disability or near an intoxicated person.

What do I do if there is bat in my home or cottage and no one has been in contact with it?

If you find a bat in your home or cottage and no one has been in contact with it, remove everybody from the room, turn the lights off, carefully open the window, leave the room and close the door. The bat will likely fly out of the window on its own at dusk. If it doesn’t leave the room, has difficulty flying or appears sick, call the local office of the Department of Natural Resources.

How can I bat proof my home or cottage?

General tips for bat proofing your home or cottage

- Carefully examine your home for holes that could allow bats to enter your living area. Any holes larger than a 1/4 inch by 1/2 inch should be filled.
- Use chimney caps, window screens and draft guards on attic doors to cover holes.
- Fill electrical and plumbing holes with stainless steel wool or caulking.
- Make sure your outside doors close tightly.
- Cover outdoor entry points to keep bats out of attics and buildings. Watch where the bats exit at dusk and loosely hang clear plastic sheeting or bird netting over the holes. Bats can leave, but can’t re-enter. Don’t permanently seal openings unless you’re sure that the bats have left for the night and there are no baby bats left in the roost.

...protect yourself from rabies