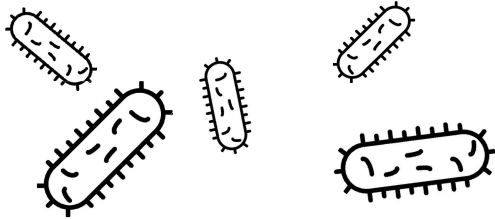
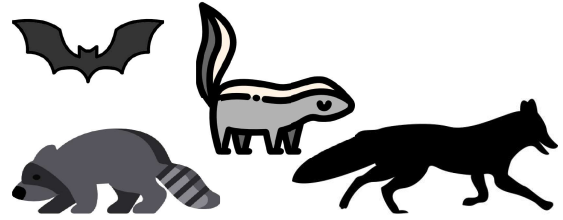


# Rabies

## Fact Sheet



Rabies is a virus that affects the brain and spinal cord. Rabies in people is rare in the United States, but more common among wild animals in Maine. The rabies virus can be found in the saliva, brain, and spinal cord of infected animals.



All mammals, or animals with fur that can produce milk, can get rabies. Some animals such as raccoons, skunks, foxes, and bats are more likely to spread rabies. Rabies is very rare among small rodents, vaccinated pets, and farm animals.

## Signs and Symptoms



Fever



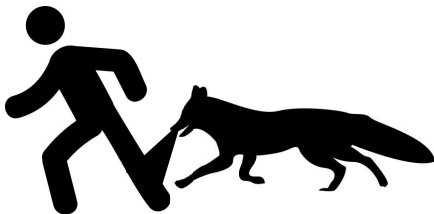
Headache



Feeling Very Tired

Early signs of rabies in humans may also include unclear thinking and anxiety. Once someone with rabies starts showing signs, they usually die. Most people start showing signs of rabies within one to three months after being infected if they do not get the proper treatment.

**Animals:** Animals with rabies may seem shy, fearful, stumble or seem drunk, mean, lame, or very friendly. Animals with rabies usually act strangely once the virus gets to their brain, but signs may vary. You cannot tell by looking at an animal if it has rabies. It can take two weeks to four months for a domestic cat or dog to show signs of rabies after being infected. It is unknown how long it takes for wild animals to show signs.



Rabies spreads when infected animals bite or scratch another person or animal. The virus can also spread if saliva or tissue from the brain or spinal cord of an infected animal gets into broken skin or the mouth, nose, or eyes.



The state public health laboratory in Augusta can test an animal's brain tissue to find out if it has rabies. In situations with animal exposures to humans, Maine CDC and local Animal Control will determine the proper response and control measures.

# What To Do If You Or Your Pet Had An Exposure

If you or your pet had contact with a wild animal or animal that you do not know, you should:



- Clean the wound thoroughly with soap and water



- Call your doctor. They can help decide if you need treatment.
- Call your town's Animal Control Officer (ACO) if the attacking animal is a cat or dog.\*
- Call your local Game Warden if the attacking animal is wild.\*\*
- Call your veterinarian and your local ACO if your pet has a bite or scratch from an animal attack.

\*Reach the ACO by calling the town office or local/state police.

\*\*Reach the Game Warden by calling the state police or your closest dispatch center.

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## Human Treatment



Treatment for people exposed to rabies is a combination of rabies vaccine and immunoglobulin (RIG) shots. This is called "post-exposure prophylaxis" or PEP.

ACOs, veterinarians and their assistants, and others who have frequent contact with stray animals or wildlife should think about getting the rabies pre-exposure vaccine.

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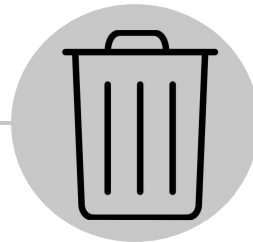
## Prevent Rabies



Make sure your pets are vaccinated. By law, all dogs and cats must be vaccinated after a certain age.



Avoid contact with all wild animals and any animal you do not know. Do not touch sick or hurt wild animals.



Fasten trashcan lids tightly and do not leave pet food outside. This keeps animals away from your house.



Talk to an exterminator or contractor about "bat-proofing" your home.

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## Important Phone Numbers

- Maine CDC Disease Reporting and Consultation: (800) 821-5821
- Health and Environmental Testing Lab: (207) 287-2727
- State Veterinarian: (207) 287-3701

Game warden dispatch centers (available 24/7):

- Augusta: (800) 452-4664
- Bangor: (800) 432-7381
- Houlton: (800) 924-2261

You can also visit [www.maine.gov/dhhs/rabies](http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/rabies) for more information.