

## How Can I Prevent Animal Bites?

- Supervise young children around all animals, even pets
- Teach children not to approach animals without the owners permission
- Avoid contact with animals you do not know, whether domestic or wild
- Be especially cautious and avoid animals that are sick or acting strangely
- Do not try to separate animals that are fighting
- Do not disturb pets when they are eating or sleeping
- Do not keep wild animals as pets

## Why is it Important to Keep Pets Current on Rabies Vaccinations?

- Dogs, cats and ferrets need to be vaccinated against rabies to protect them from the disease
- Prevention of rabies in pets helps prevent the transmission of rabies from pets to humans
- It is the law that all dogs must be vaccinated against rabies
- In some areas, cats and ferrets must also be vaccinated for rabies. Even if not required, it is a good idea to vaccinate your cats or ferrets

## Reporting Animal Bites

Washington County Code 14.13(11) requires that animal bites be reported to the Washington County Sheriff's Department. If your community does not have 24-hour local police coverage, report the bite to the Washington County Sheriff's Department at 262-335-4411.

## Where Can I Find Out More Information about Animal Bites and Rabies Prevention?

Washington County Health Department  
333 E. Washington St., Suite 1100  
West Bend WI 53095  
262-335-4462

Washington County Humane Society  
3650 State Hwy 60  
Slinger WI 53086  
262-677-4388

## Websites

<http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/communicable/rabies/>

<http://www.cdc.gov/rabies/>

Washington County Health Department – 08/2013

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## Animal Bites



## Washington County Health Department

333 E. Washington St.  
Suite 1100  
P.O. Box 2003  
West Bend, WI 53095-2003

Phone: 262-335-4462

Fax: 262-335-4705

## What Constitutes an Animal Bite or Exposure?

- ✓ Any penetration of the skin can be considered an animal “bite” exposure. This includes scratches as well as punctures
- ✓ Exposure of mucous membranes (eyes, nose, mouth) to body fluids of bats or other animals that can carry rabies, may pose a risk of transmitting rabies
- ✓ A bat bite may not arouse someone who is sleeping and the marks left from a bat bite may not be noticeable. If a sleeping person awakens to find a bat in the room, or an adult witnesses a bat in the room with a previously unattended child, mentally disabled person, or intoxicated person, medical evaluation and prophylaxis should be considered unless the bat is captured and tests negative for rabies
- ✓ Although all animal bites pose a potential for serious infection, not all animals that bite carry rabies

## Which Animals Can Carry Rabies?

- ✓ Many but not all animal species can carry the rabies virus.
- ✓ Animals that do carry rabies include: Dogs, cats, ferrets, cows, horses, sheep, pigs, goats, mink, skunk, bats, weasels, bobcats, opossum, raccoon, fox, coyote, muskrat, beaver, woodchuck, groundhog, wolf or wolf/dog mix, almost any carnivorous animal
- ✓ Animals that usually do not carry rabies include: rabbits, small rodents, squirrels, mice, chipmunks, gerbils, hamsters, Guinea pigs, birds, and gophers

## What should be done if there is an Animal Bite or Exposure?

- ✓ Thoroughly wash the bite, wound, or scratch with warm water and soap (scrub for several minutes)
- ✓ Seek medical advice from your health care provider or the health department as soon as possible to determine:
  - Proper wound care
  - Possible need for antibiotics
  - Possible need for tetanus booster
  - Possible need for rabies vaccination
- ✓ Report the bite to your local law enforcement agency or to the Sheriff’s Department. They can help determine appropriate follow-up actions.



## What is the Risk of Rabies?

- ✓ Rabies is a deadly disease that is caused by a virus that is spread through the saliva of an infected animal. Rabies can be transmitted when the saliva gets into wounds, scratches, or mucous membranes. Domestic animals and pets can carry rabies although most cases occur in wild animals such as bats, skunks and raccoons

## What should be done with an Animal that has Bitten?

- ✓ For pets or domestic animals, obtain the owner’s name, address and phone number
- ✓ Determine the rabies vaccination status of the animal and if it is wearing identification tags
- ✓ Record a description of the animal including color, size and markings
- ✓ Record the address or location where the bite occurred
- ✓ Try to capture or contain the animal if you can do so without risk of further injury to yourself
- ✓ Try not to injure the animal’s head when capturing it as this could interfere with the ability to test it
- ✓ When saving a dead animal for shipping keep it cold but do not freeze it
- ✓ Animals that carry rabies can be tested at the Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene by submitting them through a veterinarian or the Washington County Humane Society
- ✓ Dogs, cats and ferrets can be quarantined for 10 days to determine if they are rabid
- ✓ Farm animals may be quarantined on a case by case basis

