Protect your family and pets!

- Have your dogs, cats, and ferrets vaccinated regularly.
- Do not let pets roam free.
- Enjoy wildlife from a distance.
- Teach children to stay away from animals they don’t know.
- Cover garbage cans securely and do not leave pet food outside.
- Prevent bats from entering your home.
- Report bites and other animal exposures to your local health department, animal control agency, or police.

Maryland Department of Health
http://phpa.health.maryland.gov/OIDEOR/CZVBD/Pages/rabies.aspx

Maryland Department of Natural Resources
http://dnr2.maryland.gov/wildlife/Pages/plants_wildlife/bats/batsinhomes.aspx

Maryland Department of Health
Prevention and Health Promotion Administration
Infectious Disease Epidemiology and Outbreak Response Bureau
Center for Zoonotic and Vector-borne Diseases
201 West Preston Street, Baltimore, MD 21201
410-767-5649

Get Mad About Rabies!

Maryland

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Get Mad About Rabies!

July 2017
What is rabies?
- Rabies is a viral disease that attacks the nervous system of all mammals.
- Rabies is nearly always fatal once symptoms appear.
- Raccoons, skunks, foxes, cats, and bats are the most common rabid animals in Maryland.

How is rabies spread?
- Rabies virus is in the saliva of infected animals and is spread by biting.
- Being scratched or having saliva come into contact with eyes, nose, mouth, or open wounds may also be considered an exposure.
- Petting a rabid animal or coming into contact with blood, urine, feces or skunk spray of a rabid animal are not rabies exposures.
- The rabies virus is killed by heat, sunlight, drying, and many common detergents and disinfectants.
- Animals with rabies may spread the virus before they show signs of disease.

Can I tell if an animal has rabies?
- Changes in an animal’s behavior may indicate rabies.
  - Wild animals may act friendly.
  - Domestic animals may become aggressive.
  - Rabid animals may stagger, drool, or become paralyzed.

Protect yourself and your pets…Immunize!
- In Maryland, dogs, cats, and ferrets must be vaccinated against rabies by 4 months of age.
- Rabies vaccines are also available for horses, cattle, and sheep.

Rabies vaccines for humans
- There is an effective treatment to prevent rabies in humans if given promptly after an exposure.
- Pre-exposure rabies vaccination is available for people who may have frequent contact with potentially rabid animals, such as veterinarians, animal control workers, and international travelers.

What if I have been bitten or exposed?
- Get the name and address of the animal’s owner.
  - If there is no owner, remember what the animal looked like.
  - If you are bitten by a wild animal, try to safely capture or confine it.
  - If the animal must be killed, try not to damage its head.
- Immediately wash the wound thoroughly with soap and water.
  - If available, also use a disinfectant.
  - Seek medical attention promptly.
  - Report the bite or exposure to your local animal control agency, health department, or police.

What if my pet bites someone?
- A dog, cat, or ferret that bites or exposes a person will be observed for ten days.
  - If alive and healthy at the end of ten days, then the animal could not have transmitted rabies at the time of the bite.

What if my pet has been bitten?
- If your pet had contact with a wild animal, do not touch the wild animal.
- If your pet has been in a fight with a domestic animal, obtain the owner’s name, address, and telephone number.
- Avoid touching your pet with bare hands.
- Consult your veterinarian.
- Contact the local animal control agency, health department, or police.

Be aware of bats
- Most recent human cases of rabies in the U.S. have been caused by exposure to bats.
- When a person is exposed to a bat, the bat should be collected safely, if possible, and tested for rabies.
- Sometimes it is necessary to seek medical advice even in the absence of an obvious bite wound. If you or someone else in your home awakens to find a bat in the room, or any other situation in which a bat bite cannot be ruled out, call your local health department.

How do I capture a bat?
- The safest way to capture a bat is to use a wildlife cooperator or trapper.
- Your local health department or the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) can help find these professionals in your area.

Use caution if you catch the bat yourself!
- Close doors and windows.
- Wait for the bat to land.
- Wearing heavy gloves, place a coffee can or box over the bat.
- Slide a piece of cardboard under the container to trap the bat inside.
- Firmly hold the cardboard in place against the container, turn it right side up, and tape the cardboard tightly to the container.
- Do not release the bat.
- Contact your local health department or animal control agency to determine if the bat should be tested for rabies.

Bat-proof your home
- If bats are not living in your home, you can bat-proof from September 1 to March 1.
- Install window screens and chimney caps.
- Close openings greater than ¼ inch by ½ inch.
- Your local health department and the DNR can provide more information about bat-proofing and bat exclusion.