

## Contact Info

To report human exposures, for consultation, or for lab testing questions 24/7:

Maine CDC 1-800-821-5821

[www.maine.gov/dhhs/rabies](http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/rabies)

[www.mainepublichealth.gov/lab](http://www.mainepublichealth.gov/lab)

To report domestic animal exposures: contact the local town office, police department, or Animal Control Officer.

To report wild animal exposures: Call the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife dispatch center nearest you:

Augusta: 1-800-452-4664

Bangor: 1-800-432-7381

Houlton: 1-800-924-2261

[www.maine.gov/ifw](http://www.maine.gov/ifw)

To report wild animals with no exposures or for general rabies questions:

USDA APHIS Wildlife Services

1-866-4-USDA-WS

207-629-5181

[www.aphis.usda.gov/wildlife-damage/rabies](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/wildlife-damage/rabies)

For questions about livestock exposures:

Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

207-287-3701

[www.maine.gov/dacf](http://www.maine.gov/dacf)

# Rabies in Maine



Questions or concerns:  
1-800-821-5821

## What is Rabies?

Rabies is a disease caused by the rabies virus. It affects the brain and spinal cord and can cause death if left untreated.

**Rabies only infects mammals (animals with fur that produce milk).**

Rabies in wild animals is common in Maine.

Commonly infected animals are raccoons, skunks, foxes, and bats.



## How is Rabies Spread?

The rabies virus is found in the saliva, brain, and spinal cord of infected animals.

It is spread when an infected animal bites or deeply scratches a person or another animal.

Less commonly, it is spread when an infected animal's saliva, brain, or spinal cord tissue gets into a person or animal's mouth, nose, eyes, or cut in the skin.

If either of these things happens, it is considered a **rabies exposure**.

**Rabies is NOT spread by:**

- Blood
- Urine or feces
- Skunk spray
- Petting the fur of a rabid animal
- Touching **dried** saliva of a rabid animal
- Porcupine quills

**You can't tell by looking at an animal if it has rabies.**



## Human Exposure to a Domestic Animal

1. Clean wounds with soap and water.
2. Call your local ACO.
3. Call your healthcare provider.
4. The cat or dog should be confined and observed for 10 days to rule out rabies under the ACO's supervision.
5. Rabies treatment is not needed if the cat or dog is alive and healthy 10 days after the exposure.



## Human Exposure to a Wild Animal

1. Clean wounds with soap and water.
2. Call your local Game Warden.
3. Call your healthcare provider.
4. The wild animal should be submitted to HETL for rabies testing.
5. Your healthcare provider and/or Maine CDC will make recommendations about treatment while waiting for the rabies results of the wild animal.

## Pet Exposure to a Domestic Animal

1. Clean wounds with soap and water.
2. Call your local Animal Control Officer (ACO).
3. Call your veterinarian.
4. The attacking domestic animal should be confined and observed for 10 days to rule out rabies.

## Pet Exposure to a Wild Animal

1. Clean wounds with soap and water.
2. Call your local Game Warden.
3. Call your veterinarian.
4. The attacking wild animal should be submitted to Maine's Health and Environmental Testing Laboratory (HETL) for rabies testing.



## Rabies Treatment

There is no treatment for rabies once symptoms develop. However, **rabies is 100% preventable** by 1) avoiding an exposure in the first place, and 2) seeking care after an exposure.

Rabies treatment after an exposure is called rabies PEP, or rabies post-exposure prophylaxis.

Contact your healthcare provider right away after a rabies exposure. He/she will tell you if you need rabies PEP.

Rabies PEP is a series of rabies vaccine and rabies immune-globulin, or RIG, shots.

The number and type of shots needed depends on a person's health status, their weight, and whether he/she has been vaccinated for rabies in the past.

## Preventing Rabies

Vaccinate your pets against rabies. By law, all dogs and cats— even indoor cats—must be vaccinated.

Avoid contact with all wild animals and animals that you do not know.

Do not handle sick or hurt wild animals; call your local ACO or Game Warden.

Bat-proof your home, camp, or building by contacting a trained exterminator.

Consider getting pre-exposure rabies vaccine if you are an ACO, veterinarian, veterinary technician, or wildlife rehabilitator.



**If you have questions about rabies or a rabies exposure, call Maine CDC at 1-800-821-5821.**