



Was I Exposed to Rabies by a Bat?

Most bats are not rabid. However, according to CDC, recent data suggest that transmission of rabies virus can occur from minor, seemingly unimportant, or unrecognized bites from bats.

What constitutes an exposure to rabies from bats?

High-Risk Bat Exposures



Physical Contact



Bite or Scratch

People who experience exposures like this can avoid the need for rabies preventative treatment by testing the bat if it is available. If the animal tests positive for rabies, if it is not available for testing, or if it is too damaged to test, treatment for the person is necessary to prevent rabies.

Low-Risk Bat Exposures



Sleeping with a Bat In the Room

Waking with a bat in the room is considered a potential exposure to rabies. If you are reasonably certain you would awaken if a bat came into contact with you, then rabies preventative treatment is not necessary.

It can be hard to decide if you would awaken or not. Many bats are the size of a mouse. If a mouse ran across you, would you wake up? If you're not certain, or you take sedating medications, you should seek treatment.

Key Facts About Rabies and Treatment



Bats and Skunks

These animals are the most common carriers of rabies in Montana.



"Dried-Out" Bats

Bats that are desiccated, meaning they are dried out, have no viable rabies virus in them. If you've handled a dried out bat, there's no risk of transmission.



Treatment

People who are exposed to rabies can receive a preventative treatment called "Rabies Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (rPEP)". rPEP is a series of vaccines that can prevent a person from developing rabies after an exposure.



First Symptoms of Rabies

The first symptoms of rabies are very similar to the flu and can include general weakness, fever, and headache. Once clinical symptoms appear, the disease is nearly always fatal, so start treatment as soon as possible after an exposure to prevent illness and death.