

Photo of bat bite on finger. Bat bites are sometimes undetectable, which can be dangerous to humans.
Photo courtesy CDC

Have I Been Exposed To A Bat?

Bat bites are difficult to detect, so any potential contact with a bat is considered an exposure. This includes, but are not limited to the following examples:

- Anytime where a person is unsure and cannot rule exposure out
- If a person wakes up to find a bat in the same room
- If a bat is found in the room of an unattended child
- If a bat is near a person with a mental impairment
- If a person is a deep sleeper or taking sleeping medication and finds a bat in the room
- If a bat is near a person who is intoxicated
- If a person sleeps in a camp cabin where bats are spotted or swoop past sleeping people

More Information

About Rabies:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
cdc.gov/rabies

About FCCHD'S Rabies Control Program:

flatheadhealth.org/rabies-control/

About Bats:

Bat Conservation International
batcon.org


About Pets and Rabies:

American Humane Association
americanhumane.org/animals/adoption-pet-care/safety/rabies-facts-prevention.html

About Us

The Flathead City-County Board of Health sets forth the Rabies Control Program to protect the public health, safety, and welfare of the people and animals of Flathead County and to control and prevent the spread of rabies. Capturing bats in situations where exposure has occurred is essential.



 406.751.8110

 flatheadhealth.org

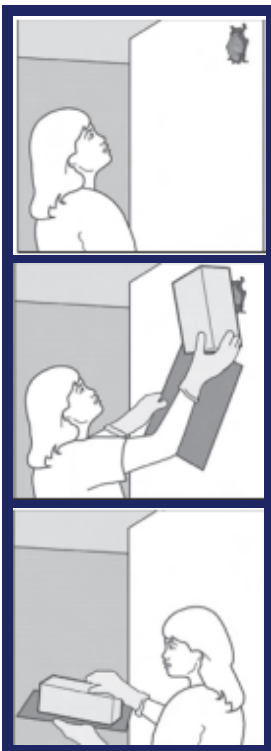
 1035 1st Ave W, Kalispell MT

HOW TO PERFORM A CATCH, KEEP, & CALL AFTER BAT EXPOSURES

A guide on bat exposures and how to capture and get them tested safely.



How To Safely Capture A Bat



If there is an exposure, then capturing a bat for testing is necessary.

- Wear leather gloves and avoid direct skin contact with bat.
- Avoid damage to the bat's head.
- Confine the bat to one room.
- Turn on lights, if the room is dark.
- Wait for bat to land on the wall or floor.
- Place a container that has a tight-fitting lid over bat.
- Slide a piece of cardboard between wall and container.
- Tape the lid to the container and call FCCHD.

Do NOT release the bat until you have spoken with a representative from the Health Department (FCCHD).

When catching a bat, remember the following:

- Do NOT damage the bat's head.
- Wear gloves and avoid direct skin contact with the bat.
- Place the bat in a clear, plastic container.
- Do NOT put the bat in the freezer.

- 1 Do NOT release the bat until you have spoken with a health department representative.
- 2 Do NOT hit or injure the bat's head, because testing could be compromised.

Who To Contact

Flathead City-County Health Department Rabies Control Program

Weekdays 8am to 5pm:

- 406.751.8110


Public Health Emergency After Hours Calls:

- 406.756.2900

Flathead County Animal Control

406.758.5610



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Bats are great for the environment. They eat large numbers of mosquitos and other insects that damage crops and transmit diseases, such as West Nile Virus. However, if a human is exposed to a bat, there is concern about rabies exposure.



Why the concern about rabies?

- Rabies is an infectious viral disease that is almost always fatal once symptoms develop.
- Rabies is usually transmitted through the bite of an infected animal.
- Rabies is 100% preventable through prompt medical care. This care includes rabies immunoglobulin and a series of vaccines. This regimen, called post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP), costs an average of \$5,000 per person with cost increasing with body weight.
- If FCCHD deems an exposure occurred and there is no bat for testing, then PEP is recommended. That is why safely capturing and testing a bat is essential.