

RABIES in Arizona



What is rabies?

Rabies is a virus that attacks the central nervous system. Infection is preventable, but always fatal once symptoms appear. All mammals including humans are susceptible. Rabies is spread by contact with saliva of an infected animal, usually through a bite wound. Brain tissue can also be infectious and should not be handled.

Which animals might have rabies?

In Arizona, rabies is found mainly in wild animals such as bats, skunks, and foxes. Sometimes, coyotes, bobcats, javelinas, and domestic animals, such as dogs, cats, and horses, can become infected with rabies if a rabid wild animal bites them. Rabbits and rodents, such as rats and squirrels, are not likely to be infected with rabies.

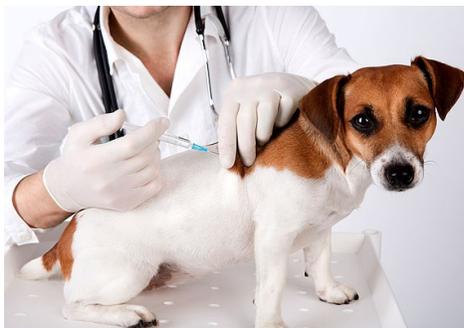
How do I know if an animal has rabies?

The first sign of rabies is usually a change in the animal's behavior. Nocturnal animals might be active during the day, stagger when walking, act more aggressive, or appear weak, paralyzed, or agitated. Bats might be found on the ground, unable to fly. If a wild animal is acting strangely or does not run away when you approach, it might be sick or injured.

**Do not try to help or touch the animal!
Stay away and call your local animal control office.**

What if a wild animal bites me?

- ◆ Immediately wash the bite wound with soap and water.
- ◆ Report the animal bite to your local health department.
- ◆ Visit your doctor for medical care and discuss anti-rabies treatment.
- ◆ Notify local animal control to capture the animal for rabies testing.
- ◆ Take precautions if trying to capture the animal.
- ◆ Do not damage the head or risk further exposure.



How can I prevent rabies?

- ◆ **Do not pick up, touch, or feed wild or unfamiliar animals, especially sick or wounded ones.**
- ◆ **Keep pets away from wild animals.**
- ◆ **Vaccinate all dogs and cats against rabies.**
- ◆ Do not "rescue" abandoned young wild animals.
- ◆ Do not try to separate two fighting animals. Wear gloves if you handle your pet after a fight with a wild animal.
- ◆ Take precautions when camping, hunting or fishing. Avoid sleeping on the open ground without the protection of a closed tent or camper.
- ◆ Do not disturb roosting bats.
- ◆ If you find a bat on the ground, don't touch it. Place a box over the bat to contain it. Report the bat and its location to animal control or health officials.
- ◆ Teach children not to handle or touch sick or injured animals including bats.

For more information on rabies in Arizona, please visit azhealth.gov/rabies or contact the Vector-borne & Zoonotic Disease team at vbzd@azdhs.gov or 602-364-3676.



ARIZONA DEPARTMENT
OF HEALTH SERVICES

*Call Game and Fish hotline to
report issues: (623)236-7201*