Photo of a bat bite on finger. Bat bites are sometimes undetectable, which can be dangerous to humans. Photo courtesy of 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
www.cdc.gov/rabies

**About FCCHD’s Rabies Control Program**
www.flatheadhealth.org/rabies-control/

**About Bats**
Bat Conservation International
www.batcon.org

**About Pets and Rabies**
American Humane Association

**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.

**FLATHEAD CITY-COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT (FCCHD)**
1035 1st Ave West
Kalispell, MT 59901
(406) 751-8110
Flatheadhealth.org
How to Safely Capture a Bat

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

Do NOT release the bat until you have spoken with a FCCHD representative.

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
Office Hours, Weekdays M-F:
(406) 751-8110
After Hours Calls:
(406) 756-2900

Flathead County Animal Control
(406) 752-1310

Bats are great for the environment. They eat large numbers of mosquitoes 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/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.