



LIVINGSTON COUNTY Health Department

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Rabid Bat Identified in Livingston County

HOWELL, Michigan. - (August 5, 2024) A bat in Livingston County has tested positive for rabies. The bat, found in Brighton, is the first rabies-positive animal identified in Livingston County this year. The Livingston County Health Department (LCHD) is reminding community members: **If you have contact with a bat, check it out before you let it out!**

“Bats are more active this time of year,” says Kristen Flory, Communicable Disease Coordinator at LCHD. “If you have contact with a bat or find a bat in your home, it’s important to report it to the Health Department. Our public health staff are available to talk through each situation and determine if there was any risk of rabies exposure.”

What to do if you are exposed

If you have contact with a bat, don’t release it until you talk with the Health Department. Bat bites are so small they are often undetectable. Costly rabies post-exposure treatments can be avoided if bats are captured and sent for rabies testing.

Report all bat exposures and animal bites to the Health Department using our [secure online form](#). If you need immediate help during normal business hours (8:00am-5:00pm, Monday-Friday), please call us at 517-552-6882.

Visit [our website](#) for more guidance on what to do if you have contact with a bat, including steps to [safely capture a bat](#).

Bat exposures

Bat bites are not always visible. An exposure may have occurred, even if you cannot see scratches or bites. Scenarios that may lead to rabies exposure include:

- a person is bitten by a bat or comes in contact with its saliva or brain tissue;
- a person awakens to find a bat in the room with them;
- a bat is in a room with an unattended child; or
- a bat is in a room with a person who is mentally disabled or intoxicated.

LCHD staff are available to talk through possible exposures and determine if there was any risk of rabies exposure.

Rabies

Rabies is a deadly but preventable viral disease. It can spread to people and pets through a bite or scratch from a rabid animal. Most reported cases occur in wild animals such as raccoons, skunks, bats, and foxes. The virus infects the central nervous system, resulting in disease within the brain and then death. There is no cure for rabies. If a person is exposed to rabies, the disease can be prevented with a series of shots before symptoms occur.

LCHD recommends the following rabies prevention measures:

- Make sure all exterior doors and windows have screens to prevent bats from entering your home. Check for other small openings, especially in older homes. Bats can enter through holes the size of a dime.
- If you are bitten or scratched by a stray or wild animal, clean the bite or scratch wound immediately with soap and water and seek immediate medical attention. Report the bite or exposure to the Health Department using our [secure online form](#).
- Keep all pets, including cats, dogs, ferrets, and horses, up to date on rabies vaccines.

Additional resources

- [Rabies Fact Sheet \(PDF\)](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) - Rabies](#)
- [Michigan Department of Health and Human Services - Rabies](#)

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