



Renfrew County and District Health Unit  
"Optimal Health for All in Renfrew County and District"

## For Immediate Release

---

(Pembroke, Ontario, 3:40 p.m., May 27, 2021)

### **RCDHU Confirms Bat Tests Positive for the Rabies Virus**

Today, Renfrew County and District Health Unit (RCDHU) received confirmation of rabies in a bat collected from a resident in the Town of Renfrew. Rabies is a virus that is transmitted through the saliva of an infected animal, usually through a bite. This virus attacks the central nervous system causing involuntary muscle spasms, and if left untreated results in death.

Rabies is a concern to public health, with RCDHU investigating approximately 300 animal bites per year. Although rabies in bats is rare in RCD, and rabies in domestic animals such as dogs and cats are rarer still, this serves as a reminder to keep your distance from bats and other animals that can carry rabies.

It is important to remember many of the bats that get into our homes are healthy bats and are looking for a way out. If you find a bat in your home and are absolutely sure that there was no human or animal contact, try to confine the bat to one room; open a window or door to the outside, turn out the lights and close the door of the room with the bat inside. The bat should fly out in the early evening.

If contact with a bat has occurred seek medical attention and/or advice immediately. Should you find a bat in your home and are unsure if it has bitten a family member, contact your Health Care Provider or RCDHU to determine if treatment is required.

If you have to pick up a dead bat, be sure to wear gloves. Place the bat in a suitable hard sided container with lid (i.e., margarine container, Mason jar, Tupperware container, etc.). When the container is sealed remove gloves, then wash your hands with soap and water. RCDHU will accept bats for analysis that have come in contact with humans provided the bat is dead.

### **What you can do to protect your family and pets from rabies:**

- Have your pets vaccinated according to instructions from your veterinarian. It is the law!
- Do not feed wild animals.
- Warn your children to stay away from wild or stray animals and pets they do not know.
- Do not attempt to trap wild animals that are causing damage to your property. Instead, contact a professional animal control officer to remove nuisance animals.
- Do not trap and transport wild animals to a new location.

- Take measures to discourage wild animals from taking up residence in your home or on your property by;
  - bat proofing the exterior of your house,
  - keeping pet food dishes indoors,
  - put garbage out on the day of collection in a pest proof container with a properly sealing lid,
  - close off entrances to all structures on your property.
- Do not keep wild animals as pets.
- Report any animals behaving strangely to your municipal animal control office or Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry.

All animal bites domestic or wild must be reported to your local health unit. These reports are investigated to determine risk to public health. After an animal bite wash the site with soap and warm water then seek medical attention. For information on what to do if you are exposed to rabies visit: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/rabies-humans#section-1> .

- 30 -

Renfrew County and District Health Unit  
Fax: 613-735-3067  
media@rcdhu.com  
www.rcdhu.com