

Allegan County Health Department Confirms Rabies in Bat

(Allegan, MI)— The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) laboratory confirmed a bat found in Allegan County tested positive for rabies. Residents are urged to stay away from wild animals such as skunks, bats, raccoons, foxes, and stray cats and dogs.

If any animal bites you or your household pet, wash the affected area thoroughly with soap and water and seek medical or veterinary attention immediately. To report an animal bite, call 911.

With winter coming, now is the best time to “bat proof” your home. If you choose to do the “bat-proofing” yourself, here are some suggestions:

- Carefully examine your home for holes that might allow bats entry into your living quarters. Caulk any openings larger than a quarter-inch by a half-inch. Use window screens, chimney caps, and draft-guards beneath doors to attics, fill electrical and plumbing holes with stainless steel wool or caulking, and ensure that all doors to the outside close tightly.
- Prevent bats from roosting in attics or buildings by covering outside entry points. Find where the bats exit at dusk and keep them from coming back by loosely hanging clear plastic sheeting or bird netting over these areas. Bats can crawl out and leave, but cannot re-enter. When all the bats are gone, the openings can be permanently sealed.

The rabies virus is found in the saliva of infected animals and is spread through bites or scratches. There are simple steps everyone can take to protect themselves from rabies:

- Have pets vaccinated regularly. This will protect them if exposed to animals with the disease and prevent them from becoming ill and infecting humans.
- Do not handle stray, wild, or dead animals.
- Keep pets indoors or supervised to limit their exposure to wild animals that may be rabid.
- Use a leash when walking dogs or keep them in a fenced-in yard.
- Do not feed or put water for pets outside
- Keep garbage securely covered, as these items may attract wild or stray animals.

For more information on rabies, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/rabies/>. Follow the [MDHHS Rabies Assessment](#) for when a person has been exposed.