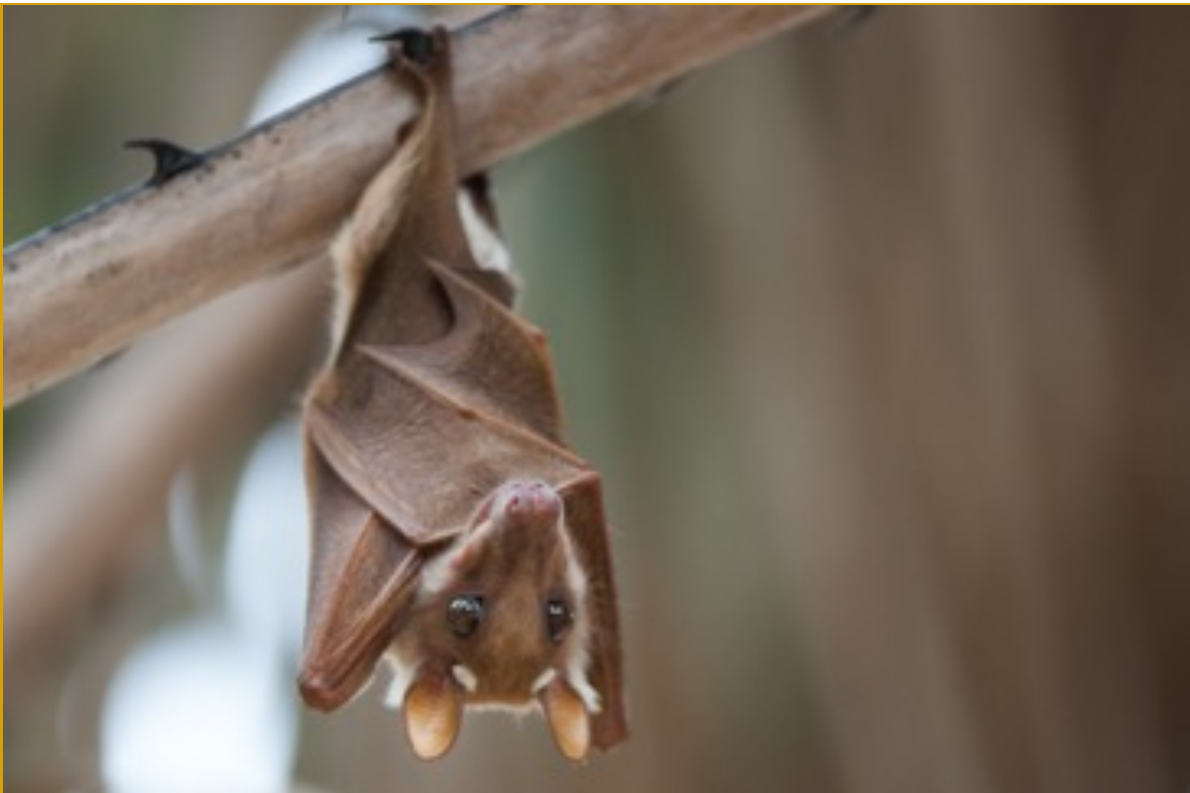


RABIES POST-EXPOSURE PROPHYLAXIS



CONTACT US

If you have questions, need help testing an animal or guidance on exposure evaluation please contact us:

Phone: 502-574-6640

Web: <https://louisvilleky.gov/government/health-wellness>



DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC HEALTH
AND WELLNESS



PUBLIC HEALTH AND WELLNESS
LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

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October 14, 2022

Key Information: Rabid bats are being found around homes in Jefferson County. There is updated post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) guidance.

Dear healthcare providers:

So far this year, three bats have tested positive for rabies. In 2021, seven tested positive. These bats have been found in locations including apartment complexes, senior living facilities and residential properties.

Per [Kentucky law \(KRS 258.065\)](#), animal bites -- including bat exposures -- must be reported to us within 12 hours of the first professional evaluation. The attached guidance also includes an animal bite reporting form. This form should be filled out as completely as possible to ensure appropriate follow-up by the health department.

[According to the CDC](#), contact with infected bats is the leading cause of human rabies deaths in the United States. While rabies deaths are rare, at least seven out of 10 Americans who have died from rabies in the U.S. were infected by bats. Transmission of rabies can occur through a bat's bite, scratch or if the animal's saliva gets in a person's eyes, nose, mouth, or an open wound. Someone may not realize they have been bitten by a bat because they have very sharp, tiny teeth.

The rabies virus infects the central nervous system. Without appropriate medical care, it can cause disease in the brain which will result in death.

[Treatment for rabies](#) consists of a dose of human rabies immune globulin and the rabies vaccine. Treatment is recommended for both bite and non-bite exposures. Once rabies symptoms begin there is no treatment, in which case the disease is [fatal](#).

During the fall months, bats start hibernating as the insect population decreases; however, bats may still be active during sporadic warm days. As they continue to be active, we want to provide you with updated guidance for rabies postexposure prophylaxis (PEP).

If there is any chance that someone has had physical contact with a bat, it [should be captured](#) and tested for rabies. These situations include finding a bat in the room of an unattended child or waking up to find a bat in the bedroom. If the bat is not available for rabies testing, then PEP should begin immediately. **The attached guidance provides an updated algorithm and considerations about rabies PEP.**

If it is determined that a patient needs rabies PEP, the treatment must be started at an emergency department (ED). EDs are the only facilities in the Jefferson County/Louisville Metro area which carry rabies immunoglobulin (RIG).

Additional information about rabies and prevention tips can be found on our [website](#).

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Howard, MD, MBA, MPH,
Interim Director, Chief Health Strategist, Medical Director
Louisville Metro Department of Public Health and Wellness



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Bat Exposures

1. Bats are the most commonly reported rabid animal in the United States.
2. Bats are the leading cause of rabies death in people in the United States.
3. Bat bites can be very small. Exposed individuals may not be aware they have been bitten or scratched.



[Avoid risk of rabies from bats](#) | [Rabies](#) | [CDC](#)

Table 1: Rabies Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) Guide: [Human Rabies Prevention - United States, 2008](#)

Animal Type	Evaluation and disposition of animal	Post-exposure prophylaxis recommendations
Dogs, cats, and ferrets	Healthy and available for 10-day quarantine	Persons should not begin prophylaxis unless animal develops clinical signs of rabies.*
	Rabid or suspected rabid	Immediately begin prophylaxis.
	Unknown (e.g., escaped)	Consult public health officials.
Skunks, raccoons, foxes, and most other carnivores; bats	Regarded as rabid unless animal proven negative by laboratory tests	Consider immediate prophylaxis.
Livestock, small rodents (rabbits and hares), large rodents (woodchucks and beavers), and other mammals	Consider individually	Consult public health officials. Bites from squirrels, hamsters, guinea pigs, gerbils, chipmunks, rats, mice, other small rodents, rabbits, and hares almost never require anti rabies post-exposure prophylaxis



Postexposure Prophylaxis for Non-immunized Individuals

Treatment	Regimen
Wound cleansing	All postexposure prophylaxis should begin with immediate thorough cleansing of all wounds with soap and water. If available, a virucidal agent such as povidine-iodine solution should be used to irrigate the wounds.
RIG	If possible, the full dose should be infiltrated around any wound(s) and any remaining volume should be administered IM at an anatomical site distant from vaccine administration. Also, RIG should not be administered in the same syringe as vaccine. Because RIG might partially suppress active production of antibody, no more than the recommended dose should be given.
Vaccine	HDCV or PCECV 1.0 mL, IM (deltoid area), one each on days 0 , 3, 7, and 14.

*A 5th dose on day 28 may be recommended for immunocompromised persons.

Postexposure Prophylaxis for Previously Immunized Individuals

Treatment	Regimen
Wound cleansing	All postexposure prophylaxis should begin with immediate thorough cleansing of all wounds with soap and water. If available, a virucidal agent such as povidine-iodine solution should be used to irrigate the wounds.
RIG	RIG should not be administered.
Vaccine	HDCV or PCECV 1.0 mL, IM (deltoid area), one each on days 0 and 3.

Where to Direct Patients for PEP

Rabies Immunoglobulin	Only available at area Emergency Departments (ED)
Vaccine – Initial Dose	Series must be initiated in the ED <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A prescription is needed for vaccine, the ED that starts the series should provide RX for remaining doses
Vaccine - Series	Can be given in the hospital setting, also available at pharmacy clinics. i.e. Little Clinic, Minute Clinic, etc. <i>After receiving your initial vaccine dose in the hospital emergency department, call ahead to a local pharmacy to schedule an appointment for the remaining doses.</i>

Reporting Requirements

Kentucky state law requires all physicians to report any animal bites. Complete [this form](#) and fax it to 502-574-5865. Call us at 502-574-6675 during working hours and 502-574-8200 for afterhours.

