

## NEWS

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### Boise County Bat Tests Positive for Rabies

**Boise County** — A bat found in Boise County has tested positive for rabies, making it the second rabid bat discovered in Idaho this season. The bat was found inside of a Boise County home where it had potential contact with a dog. The dog was current on its rabies vaccine. Those who were staying at the home are being assessed for potential exposure.

Without timely medical treatment, rabies infection is virtually 100 percent fatal in people and animals. Medical therapy given to people soon after a possible rabies exposure is extremely effective in preventing rabies. In Idaho, rabid bats are typically reported between March and November. Last year, 15 bats tested positive for rabies statewide.

“This is the time of year that we see an uptick in calls and concerns from the public related to exposure to bats,” said Sarah Correll, Epidemiologist with Central District Health Department (CDHD). “It’s important that people have their pets vaccinated to protect them in case they interact with a rabid bat or other wild animal. It’s also important for parents to talk to their kids about not touching wild animals,” said Correll.

Bites are considered the primary way rabies is transmitted, but waking up in a room with a bat, without having a clear idea of the bat’s behavior during the night can also put people and pets at risk for rabies infection. **Whenever possible, a bat found in an area (inside or outside) where people or pets may have been exposed should be captured and submitted for rabies testing.**

#### To protect yourself and your pets, CDHD offers the following tips:

- Never touch a bat with your bare hands;
- If you have had an encounter with a bat, seek medical attention;
- If you come in contact with a bat, save the bat in a container without touching it and contact your district health department to arrange testing for rabies. Whenever possible, the bat should be tested to rule out an exposure to rabies;
- Always vaccinate your pets for rabies, including horses. Pets may encounter bats outdoors or in the home; and
- Bat-proof your home or cabin by plugging all holes in the siding and maintaining tight-fitting screens on windows.

For more information on bats and rabies, visit [www.cdc.gov/rabies](http://www.cdc.gov/rabies). To track the number of rabid bats in Idaho, visit:

<http://www.healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/Health/DiseasesConditions/RabiesInformation/tabid/176/Default.aspx>

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