

NEWS

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Ada County Bat Tests Positive for Rabies

Ada County — A bat found in Boise has tested positive for rabies, increasing the state's rabid bat count to three so far this season. The bat was discovered by a person who came indoors after being outside during daylight hours. The person felt something on their back and used their hand to make a brushing off motion, and discovered it was a bat. The bat was safely collected and submitted for testing. The person exposed to the bat is undergoing the rabies-preventing therapy as a precaution.

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

Public health officials typically see an uptick in calls and concerns from the public related to bat exposure in late August and September when Idaho bats are often migrating. 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.** Specific steps should be followed when collecting a bat for testing. The Idaho Department of Fish and Game has produced a video on the safe capture of a bat: <https://idfg.idaho.gov/blog/2017/06/i-found-bat-my-home-what-do-i-do>

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. 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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