

# SPOTLIGHT ON SAFETY

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## RABIES



Most of the reported rabies cases occur in bats and skunks. Rabies cases are also reported in other wild animals such as foxes, coyotes, opossums, and raccoons. Some rabies cases involve domestic animals such as dogs, cats, and cattle. However, any warm-blooded animal can pass rabies to persons.

### *Rabies Exposure*

- Usually caused by contact with saliva during the bite of a mammal that is infected or through mucous surfaces located at the eyes, nose, or mouth
  - Concentrated airborne rabies virus may occur in caves populated by infected bats
  - Symptoms of rabies occur after 1 - 2 months of infection
1. Early symptoms include fever, headache, fatigue, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, and sore throat
  2. Late symptoms include hyperactivity, confusion, hallucinations, sleepiness, seizures, neck stiffness, or paralysis (persons with these symptoms rarely survive)
- Notify local health officers immediately if you know the location of an animal having or suspected of having rabies or if a person or animal is bitten by a rabid or suspected rabid animal

### *Rabies Prevention*

- Never approach wild mammals outdoors, especially if their behavior is unusual
- Never touch dead mammals found outdoors
- If wild animals must be handled, always wear gloves and protective equipment appropriate for the hazard
- Use a respirator when entering a closed space (cave, field building) where bats and other infected mammals are present
- If bitten by a wild mammal, wash the wound thoroughly with soap and water, cover with a sterile bandage, and get medical help immediately