

# Bat Exposure

Anyone who encounters a bat should be evaluated by a medical professional for risk of rabies.



## Encounters with a bat include:

- Direct contact with a bat = bat bite or bat saliva in your eyes, nose, mouth or fresh wound.
- Finding a bat in the same room of a person who might be unaware that a bite or direct contact had occurred.
  - \* a deeply sleeping person awakens to find a bat in the room
  - \* or an adult witnesses a bat in the room with a previously unattended child, mentally disabled person, or intoxicated person

## If you discover a bat in your home or cabin:

- **DO NOT TOUCH THE BAT**
- Call Mason County Public Health to determine if the bat needs to be tested for rabies
  - Monday-Friday, (360) 427-9670 Ext 400.
  - After hours and weekends, (360) 427-9670 Ext 274.
- If the bat does not need to be tested follow "How can I safely capture a bat in my home". See instructions to the right.

## If you are bitten by a bat:

- Wash the wound with soap and water
- Get medical attention within 24 hours
- The medical provider should immediately report the bat bite to Mason County Public Health.

## To avoid possible exposure to rabies:

- Do not touch live or dead bats
- Teach children not to touch live or dead wild animals
- Make sure your home's open windows have screens
- Vaccinate pet dogs, cats, and ferrets against rabies as required by Washington State law (WAC 246-100-197)

## Related Links:

[Rabies Information](#)  
(Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) >

[Rabies Activity in Washington State](#)  
(Washington State Department of Health) >

## How can I safely capture a bat in my home?

If a bat is present in your home and you cannot rule out the possibility of exposure, leave the bat alone and contact an animal-control or public health agency for assistance. If professional help is unavailable, use precautions to capture the bat safely, as described below.

### What you will need:

- leather work gloves (put them on)
- small box or coffee can
- piece of cardboard
- tape

When the bat lands, approach it slowly, while wearing the gloves, and place the box or coffee can over it. Slide the cardboard under the container to trap the bat inside. Tape the cardboard to the container securely, and punch small holes in the cardboard, allowing the bat to breathe. Contact your health department or animal-control authority to make arrangements for rabies testing.

If you see a bat in your home and you are sure no human or pet exposure has occurred, confine the bat to a room by closing all doors and windows leading out of the room except those to the outside. The bat will probably leave soon. If not, it can be caught, as described, and released outdoors away from people and pets.



## Common Bat Entry Points

