



Boone County
DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC HEALTH

1204 Logan Avenue ♦ Belvidere, Illinois 61008

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The mission of the BCDPH is to protect and promote health in Boone County.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 21, 2016

Boone County Health Department
1204 Logan Ave.
Belvidere, IL 61008

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815.547.8590

Boone County Health Department Warns Residents to Avoid Contact with Bats

The Boone County Health Department reports a bat was recently identified as rabies-positive in Boone County and offers warning to residents that the presence of rabies can be a serious risk to pets and family members. The Health Department is urging residents to avoid contact with bats as they start becoming more active during this time of year. Bats are the primary carrier of rabies in Illinois.

"With identification of a rabid bat in Boone County, we are urging residents to call Animal Control at 815-547-7774 if a bat is found inside the home." said Amanda Mehl, Public Health Administrator at the Boone County Health Department. It's important to remember that you should never try to approach or catch a bat, or any wild animal, in your home. If you suspect exposure to bats, report that exposure immediately to the Health Department at 815-544-2951, Ext. 2.

The best way to prevent this is to seal cracks, chimney holes, or other areas that may allow a bat to enter. Additionally, pets should be kept up-to-date in rabies vaccinations.

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Avoid Contact with Bats

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Rabies is a virus that affects the nervous system of humans and other mammals. Humans can get rabies after being bitten by an infected animal. Rabies can also be contracted when saliva from a rabid animal gets directly into the eyes, nose, mouth or a wound. Without preventive treatment, rabies is a fatal disease. If you have been bitten or exposed to a bat, seek immediate medical attention. Treatment with rabies immune globulin and a vaccine series must begin immediately. "You cannot tell by looking at a bat if it is rabid. The animal does not have to be aggressive or exhibit other symptoms to have rabies," said Roger Tresemer, Operational Supervisor for Boone County Animal Control. "Any wild mammal, such as a raccoon, skunk, fox, coyote or bat, can have rabies and transmit it to humans."

Changes in any animal's normal behavior, such as difficulty walking or an overall appearance of illness, can be early signs of rabies. For example, rabid skunks, which normally are nocturnal and avoid contact with people, may approach humans during daylight hours. A bat that is active during the day, found on the ground or is unable to fly is more likely than others to be rabid. Such bats are often easily approached, but should never be handled.

Information about keeping bats out of your home or buildings can be found by logging on to www.idph.state.il.us/envhealth/pcbats.htm.

Information about rabies can be found at www.idph.state.il.us/health/infect/reportdis/rabies.htm.

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