



Community Feature Human Services

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WAKE REMINDS RESIDENTS TO LEAVE BATS ALONE

During spring and summer, bats become more active and can find their way into homes. Bats can carry rabies, a fatal infection of the nervous system, which can also affect humans. In 2013, Wake County tested 87 bats for rabies. In that same year 77 people received shots to prevent possible rabies, often because the bat was unavailable for testing.

Prevention and protection are the initial steps to help decrease the chance of rabies exposure caused by contact with a bat. “The most important thing is to keep bats out of your home and to leave bats alone if you see one,” said Wake County Public Health Division Director Sue Lynn Ledford. “Not every bat has rabies, but you cannot tell if a bat is sick by looking at it. Never touch any bat.”

Batproof Your Home

Bats can squeeze through small spaces so residents should look for holes that might allow bats to enter their homes. To help keep bats from entering a home:

- Caulk or block any openings larger than a quarter inch by a half inch.
- Use screens on windows.
- Make sure all doors to the outside close tightly.
- Cap chimneys.
- Use draft-guards beneath doors to attics.

How to Deal With a Bat & Possible Bites

Bats have small teeth and may not leave bite marks. If a person has had possible contact with a bat, or if the bat was found in a room with a young child or any person that is unable to say what has happened, the bat should be trapped for testing. This can be done by putting a weighted container over the bat, or simply closing the doors and windows in the room and calling Animal Control.

Testing a bat helps to determine whether a person needs rabies vaccines. If there is no bat to test, rabies vaccines are given to people who might have been exposed to prevent possible rabies.

Any person touched or bitten by a bat should wash the area with soap and water and go to the doctor. If a pet is bitten, call a veterinarian. North Carolina law requires that all pets be up-to-date on rabies vaccines.

Who to Call

People with questions about possible exposure to rabies or that come into contact with bats or other

wildlife should call the Wake County Communicable Disease Surveillance Team at 919-250-4462.

To reach Animal Control, call:

Cary	919-319-4517
Garner	919-772-8810
Holly Springs	919-557-9111
Raleigh	919-831-6311
All other places in Wake County	919-212-PETS (7387)

For an informative video about bats and rabies, go to www.youtube.com/wakegov.

For more information on bats and rabies, visit www.cdc.gov/features/bats or www.wakegov.com/humanservices/publichealth/information/diseases/Pages/rabies.aspx.

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