

# **Delaware General Health District**

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# NEWS RELEASE

### **DELAWARE WOMAN RECEIVING TREATMENT AFTER BITE FROM RABID BAT**

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

For further information contact Jesse Carter, public information officer, at 740-203-2085.

**DELAWARE, Oh., July 30, 2009** – A bat found Monday in the City of Delaware has tested positive for rabies. A woman bitten by the bat is receiving precautionary medical treatment.

Area residents are urged to make sure that their pets are vaccinated against rabies, and to be on the lookout for dead bats and wild animals displaying unusual behavior.

Rabies is a viral disease that attacks mammals' nervous systems. It is fatal unless treated. The rabid bat found Monday in a North Sandusky Street residence was the first one found in Delaware County this year. Five were found in the county in 2008.

Bats are being tested for rabies if they are suspected of exposing a person or persons to the disease. Any bat found inside an occupied home should be tested, as well as any bat that bites or scratches a person or a pet. The state laboratory is performing rabies tests on bats that potentially exposed a human or a pet to the disease.

Because bats can carry rabies, people need to be very careful when they handle bats, particularly when they are alive. To safely capture a live bat indoors:

- Get children and pets out of the room where the bat is, and shut it inside.
- Put on thick leather gloves. (Always wear leather gloves when you handle a bat, whether it is alive or dead.)
- Wait for the bat to land. (Also, never take your eyes off the bat while you are in the same room with it.)
- Use a plastic bowl or other solid container with an open top to trap the bat. Slide a piece of cardboard or other hard flat material between the container and the surface where the bat is resting, taking care to not let it escape. Once the cardboard covers the opening, tape it securely to the container.

Anyone who finds a newly deceased bat that should be tested is asked to collect it. Double-bag the carcass and place it in a refrigerator. Do not freeze the bat. Call the Delaware General Health District at 740-368-1700 during weekday business hours, and arrangements will

be made to collect the carcass for testing. After hours, residents can call the Health District Information Line, 740-203-2015.

Residents are further urged to follow these precautions against rabies:

- Unless a bat needs to be collected for testing, leave it alone.
- Make sure dogs, cats – particularly barn cats -- and ferrets have up-to-date rabies vaccinations.
- Supervise dogs and cats when they are outside to avoid encounters with wild animals that might be carrying rabies.
- Make sure window screens are always in place and keep doors closed to prevent bats from entering your home.
- Teach children to never touch or play with any unfamiliar, wild, or sick animals.
- Use soap and water to clean any wounds caused by encounters with bats, and seek medical attention immediately.

The Ohio Department of Health reported that a total of 55 rabid bats were found in Ohio last year. Rabid bats were found in Franklin and Licking counties as well as Delaware County.

No human rabies infections have been confirmed here for many years. Some local residents have received precautionary rabies vaccine treatments, however, because of possible exposure to rabid bats.