



"Healthy People, Healthy Communities"

Mendocino County Health and Human Services Agency

Mental Health ♦ Public Health ♦ Social Services

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Bat Tests Positive for Rabies

A sick bat recently found in the Ukiah area has tested positive for rabies. It is the first animal testing positive in Mendocino County since 2008. Rabies is a viral disease that affects the central nervous system. The virus is usually passed to humans via the bite of a rabid animal. Occasionally rabies can be transmitted if the saliva of an infected animal gets into a fresh scratch, break in the skin, or contact with eyes, mouth or nose.

Human rabies is rare in the United States, but it is a serious, potentially fatal disease that must be treated shortly after an exposure.

Please avoid contact with wild animals. In California, most cases of rabies occur in skunks and bats, but also occur in a variety of wild animals including foxes. Symptoms in animals vary with the species and stage of the disease, but abnormal behavior is the most obvious sign. Special signs to watch for include:

- Wild animals that seem unusually tame or unafraid.
- Nocturnal animals that are active during the daylight.
- Bats that are unable to fly or have been caught by a domestic cat or dog.

Preventive measures to follow to reduce exposure include not handling or feeding wild animals. Never adopt or bring wild animals into your home. Teach your children to never handle unfamiliar animals, wild or domestic, even if they appear friendly. Please contact your veterinarian to make sure pets are current with their rabies vaccine. Because cats are the most frequently reported rabid domestic animal in the U.S., vaccination of all cats is strongly advised.