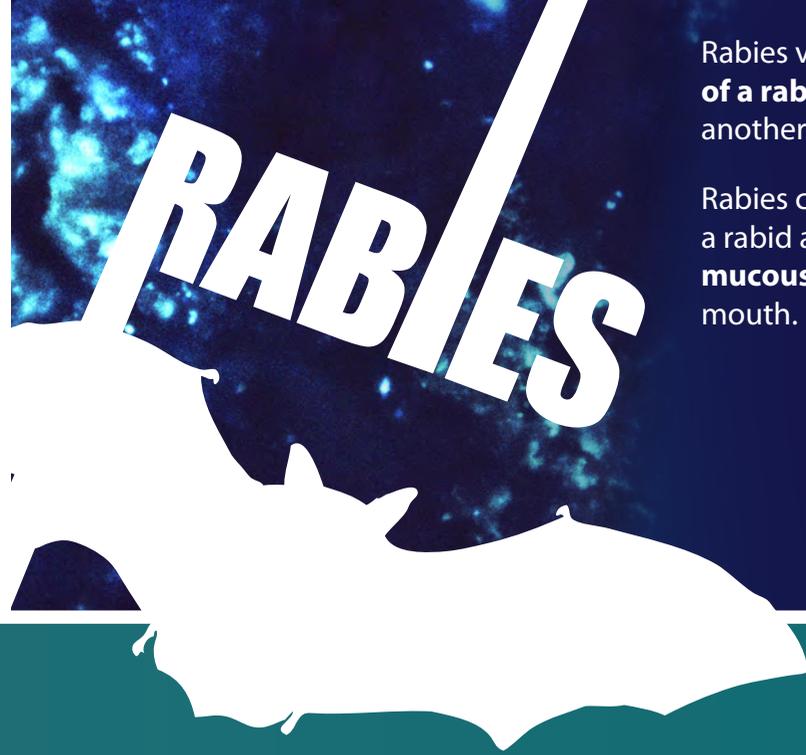


Edmund G. Brown Jr., Governor
State of California

Diana S. Dooley, Secretary
Health and Human Services Agency

Ron Chapman, MD, MPH, Director
California Department of Public Health



Rabies virus is **transmitted through the saliva of a rabid animal** when it bites a person or another animal.

Rabies can also be transmitted when saliva from a rabid animal **gets into a break in the skin or mucous membranes**, such as eyes, nose, or mouth.



Rabies virus is maintained in certain species of mammals.

In California, bats and skunks are the wild animals in which rabies virus is most frequently detected. Other wild animals, such as coyotes, foxes, and raccoons, are occasionally diagnosed with rabies.

Domestic animals-cats, dogs, horses, and cows-can get rabies from wild animals. Birds, reptiles, amphibians, and fish are not susceptible to rabies.



In California, rabies virus is most frequently detected in skunks and bats.

Veterinary Public Health Section
September 2011

<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/vphs/Pages/default.aspx>

Signs of rabies in wild animals:

Because rabies virus attacks the brain, rabid animals often display unusual or unnatural behavior. Potentially rabid animals can include:



Wild animals **acting unusually tame** or unafraid of approaching people.

Nocturnal animals, such as skunks and bats that are active **during the day**.

Bats that are **unable to fly** or have been caught by a domestic pet.

Pets that are having **trouble walking, drinking, or eating**, or display a change in temperament.

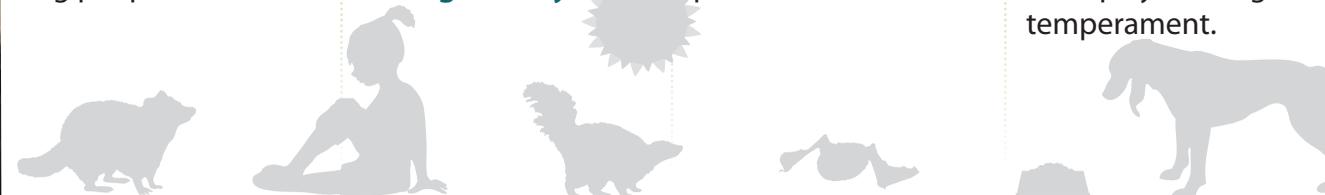


Photo Credits:

Coyote-Don DeBold
Cat-Daniela Muhawi
Raccoon Stare-Daniela Muhawi
Skunk on Grass-JMalcolm
Bat with Background-Jean Yim, Lindsay Wildlife Museum

Symptoms of Rabies in People



Rabies is a **very serious disease** and is almost always fatal if not treated before symptoms appear.

The symptoms of rabies can vary, but patients typically first experience **fever, headache, and malaise** approximately four to eight weeks after exposure to the virus.

After a few days, the **virus affects the nervous system** and patients can experience tingling, itching, or numbness at the bite site; difficulty walking, speaking, or swallowing; and confusion, agitation, and lapses of consciousness. Paralysis, coma, and death occur within a week.

Do NOT handle or feed wild animals.



Pet Exposure to Rabies



If a wild animal bites your pet, **do not attempt to intervene** or capture the wild animal.

Report the bite to your local animal control agency as soon as possible.

If the wild animal can be collected by animal control, it will be euthanized and tested for rabies.

If you think you may have been exposed to rabies, contact your doctor.

Rabies Prevention



All dogs over the age of 4 months are **required by California law to be vaccinated** for rabies.

Rabies **vaccination should be considered for other animals** such as cats and horses that are outdoors and have potential contact with wild animals. Consult your veterinarian about which vaccines are appropriate for your animals.

Do not approach, handle, or feed wild and unfamiliar animals, even if they appear tame. Do not bring wild animals into your home or keep them as pets.

Seal holes or gaps in your home where bats and other animals could enter.

Around your home **do not leave out pet food**, garbage, or other items that attract wild animals.

Maintain control of your pets by keeping them under direct control and adult supervision when off your property.

Animal Bites



If you are bitten or scratched by an animal:

Immediately wash the wound with soap and water.

Call your doctor for medical attention.

Be prepared to **provide detailed information** about the date, time, and location of the bite; a **description of the animal**; and what you were doing at the time of the bite.

Your doctor will discuss with you the need for anti-rabies treatment.

Any bite from a wild or unknown animal should be considered as a possible source of rabies.