



Greene County Public Health

Melissa Howell MS, MBA, MPH, RN, REHS, Health Commissioner

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Press Release

For Immediate Release
August 19, 2024

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Bats & Rabies: What You Need to Know

XENIA, OH — Wild animals – especially bats – are the most common source of human rabies infection in the United States. Rabies is a very serious disease caused by a virus that attacks the brain and nervous system. Rabies is spread through the saliva of a rabid animal, usually from a bite or scratch. It can be fatal if ignored or left untreated. People or pets who come in contact with an animal species known to carry rabies should seek prompt medical treatment. Rabies can be found in wild animals that are common in our area including skunks, raccoons, coyotes, foxes, and bats.

In August, Greene County Public Health submitted a bat for rabies testing from the Yellow Springs area. There were no human exposures to this animal. But this event highlights the potential risks that certain wild animals pose to us and our pets.

Did you know that...

- Rabies results in over 55,000 human deaths in the world each year. Every year, more than 15 million people worldwide receive a post-exposure vaccination to prevent the disease – this is estimated to prevent hundreds of thousands of rabies deaths annually.
- Dogs are the source of the vast majority of human rabies deaths worldwide.
- To date in 2024 in Greene County, 25 wild animals have tested positive for the rabies virus in Ohio.

What can you do...

- All dogs, cats, and ferrets should be vaccinated against rabies. Consider vaccinating valuable livestock and horses.
- Pet owners can reduce the possibility of pets being exposed to rabies by not letting them roam free.
- Spaying or neutering your pet may reduce the tendency they might have to roam or fight.
- Enjoy all wild animals from a distance and teach children never to handle unfamiliar animals – even if they appear friendly.
- Avoid sick or strange-acting animals.
- Do not keep wild animals as pets.
- *Do not touch or pick-up dead animals with bare hands.*
- Leave bats alone and bat-proof your home. If you discover a bat has entered your bedroom overnight, you may have been exposed to rabies.
- Consult Greene County Public Health officials if there is a possibility that you or a family member have had contact with any wild animal known to carry rabies

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- Immediately clean a wound after any contact with a wild animal, and consult a physician right away to discuss your prevention options. .

The Ohio Department of Health Laboratory provides testing of rabies-suspect animals. Contact Greene County Public Health for questions about submitting an animal for testing.

More information can be found on our website at <https://www.gcph.info/environmental-health/rabies>.

For further information, please contact Shadrick Adams, Environmental Health Director, at 937-374-5682, or Donna Jenkins, Communicable Disease Nurse, at 937-374-5638.

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