



Renfrew County and District Health Unit
"Optimal Health for All in Renfrew County and District"

For Immediate Release

(Pembroke, Ontario, August 1, 2025)

Bat in Renfrew County and District Tests Positive for Rabies

Renfrew County and District Health Unit (RCDHU) has received confirmation that a bat collected in the City of Pembroke has tested positive for the rabies virus. The bat was submitted as part of an investigation into a potential human exposure and RCDHU has followed up with those involved to prevent rabies infection.

Local human exposures to bats have been increasing in recent weeks and RCDHU is advising Renfrew County and District residents to remain vigilant about the risk of rabies. This animal rabies case is the first in Renfrew County and District this year. From 2021-2025, 33 bats have been submitted for rabies testing. Of these 33, four (12%) tested positive for rabies.

Rabies is a viral infection that causes inflammation of the brain and spinal cord, which is almost always fatal. Rabies is transmitted to humans through direct contact with saliva from an infected animal, usually through a bite, but saliva contamination of cuts, scratches, or mucous membrane is also possible. The animals that most commonly have rabies in Ontario are bats, skunks, and raccoons. Human rabies cases in Canada are very rare.

RCDHU advises residents to do the following to protect against rabies:

- Vaccinate your pets against rabies; it is the law in Ontario that all cats, dogs, and ferrets over 3 months of age are vaccinated against rabies.
- Stay away from wild animals and always refrain from feeding, touching, or handling wildlife.
- Do not trap and transport wild animals to a new location.
- Warn children to stay away from wild or stray animals.
- Keep pets away from wild animals and do not let pets roam unsupervised.
- Bat-proof your home or cottage by:
 - o Caulking holes in the exterior, even those as small as one-quarter to one-half inch in diameter.

- o Tightening screens, capping your chimney, placing draft guards under doors leading to the attic and outside, and filling plumbing fixture holes with steel wool or caulk.
- o Keeping doors tightly closed when going outside and coming back indoors.

If you have been bitten or scratched by an animal:

- Collect the contact information of the animal's owner/custodian where applicable (their name, address and phone number).
- Immediately thoroughly wash all bite or scratch wounds with soap and water.
- Seek immediate medical attention to assess the need for post exposure treatment. Rabies vaccines are highly effective at preventing the disease if administered soon after an exposure.
- Report the incident to RCDHU at 613-732-3629 ext 505.

If you find a bat in your home:

- Confine the bat to one room, turn off the light and open a window so that it can fly out on its own.
- If the bat does not leave on its own, contact pest control experts who can humanely capture and release the bat.
- If the bat is found in a bedroom, there has been any direct contact with a child, or you cannot rule out exposure to the bat's saliva, call a healthcare provider or RCDHU at 613-732-3629 ext 505 for advice immediately.
- Bats have tiny teeth and a bite mark from a bat can be difficult to find.

To report a wild animal that you suspect may have rabies, follow the steps at [Rabies in wildlife | ontario.ca](http://Rabiesinwildlife.ontario.ca).