



## NEWS RELEASE

### Public Health

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## Rabid bats confirmed in County

There have been nine confirmed rabid bats in San Bernardino County including four within the past two weeks in Rancho Cucamonga, Fontana and Apple Valley. San Bernardino County Public Health is urging the public to protect themselves and their pets from interactions with unfamiliar, stray or wild animals.

"Rabies is almost always fatal in humans once symptoms begin," stated Dr. Erin Gustafson, County Interim Health Officer. "It is important to seek medical attention as soon as possible for any animal bite or possible rabies exposure."

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the most common wild reservoirs of rabies are raccoons, skunks, bats, and foxes. Domestic mammals can also get rabies. Cats, cattle, and dogs are the most frequently reported rabid domestic animals in the United States. Rabies among domestic animals is rare with animal vaccination programs.

Prevent exposure to rabies by following the tips below:

- Do not touch, feed, harass or provide shelter for any unfamiliar pets, wild or stray animals.
- Vaccinate pets against rabies. Dogs are required to be vaccinated for rabies at four months of age. Cats can be vaccinated as early as twelve to sixteen weeks old. The first rabies vaccine is effective for one year. After that initial shot, pets should be re-vaccinated every three years.
- Get pets spayed or neutered.
- Do not let pets roam free.
- Keep trash cans tightly covered and avoid storing any food outside.
- Bat-proof the home by sealing small openings and keeping unscreened doors and windows closed.
- Teach children never to approach any unfamiliar animals and to tell an adult immediately if they are bitten or scratched by any animal.
- Seek immediate medical attention if you are exposed to or bitten by an animal.
- Report any bite or scratch from a domestic or wild animal to the [animal control agency](#) for the area where the bite/scratch occurred.
- Report dead bats immediately to the [animal control agency](#) the animal is located in.
- Do **NOT** attempt to touch or confine stray or wild animals.

San Bernardino County Animal Care and Control (ACC) provides services in all the unincorporated areas of the county, except for the West End unincorporated communities, as well as the cities of Big Bear Lake, Highland and Yucaipa. Residents that live outside of ACC's service areas can check the list of other [animal control agencies](#) that provide services in the county.

For more information, contact San Bernardino County Animal Care and Control Services at 1-800-472-5609.

