

PROTECT YOURSELF AGAINST

# Rabies



## What is rabies?

Rabies is a disease caused by a virus that is spread by wild animals, such as raccoons, skunks, and bats. Wild animals and domestic animals, such as dogs, cats, and horses, can get rabies. People can get rabies too. Rabies is fatal if not treated.

## How is rabies spread?

The virus is found in saliva and brain tissue in an infected animal. Rabies is usually spread by bites from infected animals. It could also be contracted if the virus comes in contact with the eyes, nose, mouth or a cut in the skin.

## What does a rabid animal look like?

Animals with rabies often have unusual behaviour. They may be tame and friendly or be very aggressive, attacking other animals, people and objects. They may drool a great deal and have difficulty walking or even moving. Eventually, the animal will die.

## What are the rabies symptoms in humans?

The incubation period - the time between exposure and the onset of symptoms - varies, but it is typically one-to-three months. The early symptoms of rabies include headache, fever, lethargy, and sometimes discomfort at the site of exposure. Within days, the disease progresses to paralysis, spasms of the throat muscles, convulsions, delirium, and death.

## What if you are bitten?

Following a bite or other potential exposure to rabies virus, wash the wound thoroughly with soap and water for 10 minutes. Seek medical attention immediately. A doctor will assess the risk and determine if preventive treatment is necessary. This treatment is very effective if administered soon after exposure.

## How may you be protected against rabies?

### PREVENT ANIMAL BITES:

- Socialize and train your dog.
- Do not approach an unfamiliar dog or cat.
- Ask permission before petting a dog.
- Do not leave infants or young children alone with a dog or cat.

### BE A RESPONSIBLE PET OWNER:

- Spay/neuter your pet.
- Vaccinate your pet against rabies and consult your veterinarian to make sure the vaccine is up to date.
- Do not allow your pet to roam alone.

### ENJOY WILDLIFE FROM A DISTANCE:

- Do not feed or handle wild animals.
- Do not adopt wild animals as pets.
- Leave wild animals that appear abandoned or orphaned alone.
- Prevent bats from entering the living spaces in your home.
- Do not move live wild animals from one location to another.

### GET IMMUNIZED:

- Consider rabies immunization if you are in contact with potentially high risk animals or if you are travelling to areas where rabies is widespread.

**Call 811 if you encounter an animal suspected of having rabies.**

Visit [GNB.CA/Rabies](https://www.gnb.ca/Rabies) to find out more about rabies and other animal-related diseases.