

# PUBLIC HEALTH CONNECTION



## Animal Bites

### Prevention of Animal Bites

Although puppies and kittens you come across are cute, please don't touch! Animal bites from stray and domesticated animals account for millions of doctors' office and hospital visits every year. Most animal bites are preventable:

- Don't leave young children alone with pets. Most bites affecting young children occur during everyday activities and while interacting with familiar dogs.
- Educate yourself and children about whether to approach an animal.
- Don't touch an animal that you don't know, even if it seems sick or injured. Instead write down a description and location of the animal. Report the concern to Animal Protection Services at the Scott County Human Society. A trained professional will safely capture the animal.
- Never attempt to feed or catch a wild animal.
- Avoid an animal that is growling or barking.
- Never stick your finger in an animal's cage.

### What should you do if you are bit by an animal?

**Wash the wound immediately and seek medical care.** Medical providers will evaluate and provide wound care, check that your recommended vaccinations are up-to-date and ensure you are not at risk for being exposed to the rabies virus. Rabies in people is 100% preventable through prompt medical care. Animals carry bacteria in their mouth which can cause serious skin infections. Providers may also prescribe a medication to prevent infection.

**Speak with Animal Protection Services.** All animal bites should be reported to Animal Protection Services at the Scott County Human Society. They will help to find the animal and ensure the animal is up-to-date on vaccines. Try to write down the animal's description, location of where the incident happened, and any other important information about the incident.



### OUR MISSION:

The Scott County Health Department promotes, protects, and preserves health through leadership, services, education, and partnerships.

### OUR VISION:

Scott County—  
A safe and healthy  
community.



## SPECIAL EVENTS

- *Scott County Board of Health Meeting, Scott County Administrative Center, 1st Floor Boardroom, 12:00 PM, Thursday, October 21, 2021.*

## Links

- CDC Human Prevention <https://www.cdc.gov/rabies/prevention/people.html>
- CDC Bats and Rabies <https://www.cdc.gov/rabies/bats/education/index.html>



## Rabies and Bats

Bats are beneficial creatures that help eat insects, scatter seeds, and pollinate. Because they are mammals, they can develop rabies, a fatal disease. Most bats do not have rabies. However, of the one or two human rabies cases each year in the United States, the most common source of infection was through contact with a bat in the home. You cannot tell if a bat has rabies just by looking at it. The only way to know for certain is to have the animal tested in a laboratory. To be safe, never handle a bat.

This principal “Love your own, leave other animals alone” is good advice for handling any animal.

Wash any wound thoroughly with soap and water and seek medical attention immediately. Treatment options are available if you act early. Have all dead, sick, or easily captured bats tested for rabies if exposure to people or pets occurs. Take steps to prevent bats from entering living quarters or occupied spaces in homes, churches, schools, and other similar areas where they might contact people and pets.



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