



# Bat Rabies in South Dakota

Unlike most animal bites, bat bites can be very difficult to detect. Punctures can be less than 1 mm in diameter and scratches less than 1 cm in length. Since bat bites are surface wounds, you may not feel pain and may not realize that an exposure even took place.

CDC guidelines for rabies postexposure prophylaxis treatment:

<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5703a1.htm>

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- **If a person has direct contact with a bat, the bat should be captured and sent to a lab\*. If the bat cannot be captured, treatment should be given to the patient.**
  - **Exposure should be considered if a person is in the same room as a bat and may be unaware of direct contact. Such instances include a sleeping person waking up with a bat in the room, or a bat in the same room as a young child, a mentally disabled person, or an intoxicated person.**
  - **In the case of possible exposure, the bat should be captured if at all possible and sent to a lab. If not, the physician should consider administering postexposure prophylaxis.**



- Postexposure prophylaxis includes 1 dose of rabies immune globulin and 5 doses of human diploid cell rabies vaccine administered in the arm on days 0, 3, 7 and 14 as soon after exposure as possible.



- The rabies virus is fatal without prompt treatment. It is imperative that the rabies postexposure prophylaxis be given prior to onset of symptoms.

◆ 37 rabid bats reported in South Dakota 2004-2013.

◆ 19 cases of human rabies caused by bats in the USA 2004-2013.

◆ You cannot get the rabies virus from bat feces, urine, or blood. You will not get rabies from touching the bat's fur, although a bat should never be handled with bare hands.

\*The SD Public Health Lab in Pierre (call 773-3368) and the Animal Disease Research and Diagnostic Laboratory in Brookings (688-5171) are the only labs in SD approved for testing for the rabies virus.

Rabies consultations or additional information:  
South Dakota Department of Health **1-800-592-1861**

