



RABIES

What to do if you come in contact with an animal that might carry rabies

In Imperial County, bats have tested positive for rabies, making it an area considered high-risk for rabies. Rabies among domestic animals in Imperial County is rare.

How do people get rabies?

People usually get rabies from the bite of a rabid animal – an animal with rabies. It is also possible, but rare, that people may get rabies if infectious material from a rabid animal, such as saliva, gets directly into their eyes, nose, mouth, or a wound.

Which animals get rabies?

The most common wild animals that could carry rabies are **raccoons, skunks, bats, foxes** and **coyotes**. Domestic animals can also carry rabies; these include **cats, cattle, and dogs**. Rabies can only be confirmed through a laboratory test.

What should a person do if bitten by an animal?

- In Imperial County, the most likely rabies carriers are those animals mentioned above.
- If bitten, immediately wash the bitten area very well with soap and water to minimize the chances for infection.
- Seek medical attention immediately with your doctor.
- Your doctor will care for the wound and judge the risk for rabies exposure.

The following information will help your doctor judge your risk for rabies:

- Knowing where the incident took place
- The type of animal that was involved
- How the exposure occurred (provoked or unprovoked)
- If the animal was vaccinated against rabies or not
- Whether the animal can be safely captured and tested for rabies

Contact **Imperial County Animal Control at (760) 339-6291** to report the animal that did the biting as soon as possible.

How soon after an exposure should a person seek medical attention?

Medical attention should be obtained **as soon as possible** after an exposure. There have been no cases of someone developing rabies when treatment was given soon and appropriately after an exposure. People exposed to rabies may receive *post exposure prophylaxis* or PEP. In the United States, PEP consists of a regimen of one dose of immune globulin and five doses of rabies vaccine over a 28-day period. Animals may need to be placed in quarantine or tested for possible rabies.

For more information about rabies, please contact:
Imperial County Public Health Department, Field Nursing
Tel: (760) 482-4451 • Fax: (760) 482-4738

or

To report a problem with an animal please contact:
Imperial County Animal Control
Tel : (760) 339-6291