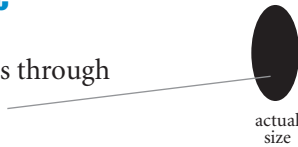


The bat will likely fly out of the room on its own at dusk. If it doesn't leave the room, has difficulty flying, or appears sick, call Public Health Services. Bats are an important part of our natural environment, so never kill one needlessly. They can eat their weight in insects each night.

Bat-proof your home

Bats can enter buildings through tiny spaces like this



For information on bat-proofing your home or cottage:

- Contact a private pest control service if you wish to have this done for you.
- Read Bats and Rabies at: www.gov.ns.ca/hpp/cdpc/rabies.asp.
- Visit the Department of Natural Resources website at www.gov.ns.ca/natr.

Protect pets from rabies

- Get your pet vaccinated. This is the best protection. In Canada, an average of eight dogs and four cats get rabies each year. Pets also need regular booster shots.
- Keep dogs on a leash. Don't let pets roam freely where there are wild animals.
- Keep unvaccinated pets indoors.
- Contact your veterinarian if your pet may have been bitten by another animal.

Protect your family from rabies

- Get your pets vaccinated.
- Teach children never to touch wild animals or animals they do not know, even if they seem tame or friendly. "Love your own, leave other animals alone" is a good safety rule.
- Keep wild animals and stray animals out of your home and cottage.
- Never try to nurse a wild or stray animal back to health. A sick animal could have rabies.
- Never feed wild animals.
- Close garbage can lids tightly so you don't attract wild animals.
- Feed your pets inside. If you do feed them outside, remove uneaten food promptly.
- Call animal control to remove stray animals from your neighbourhood.

For more information

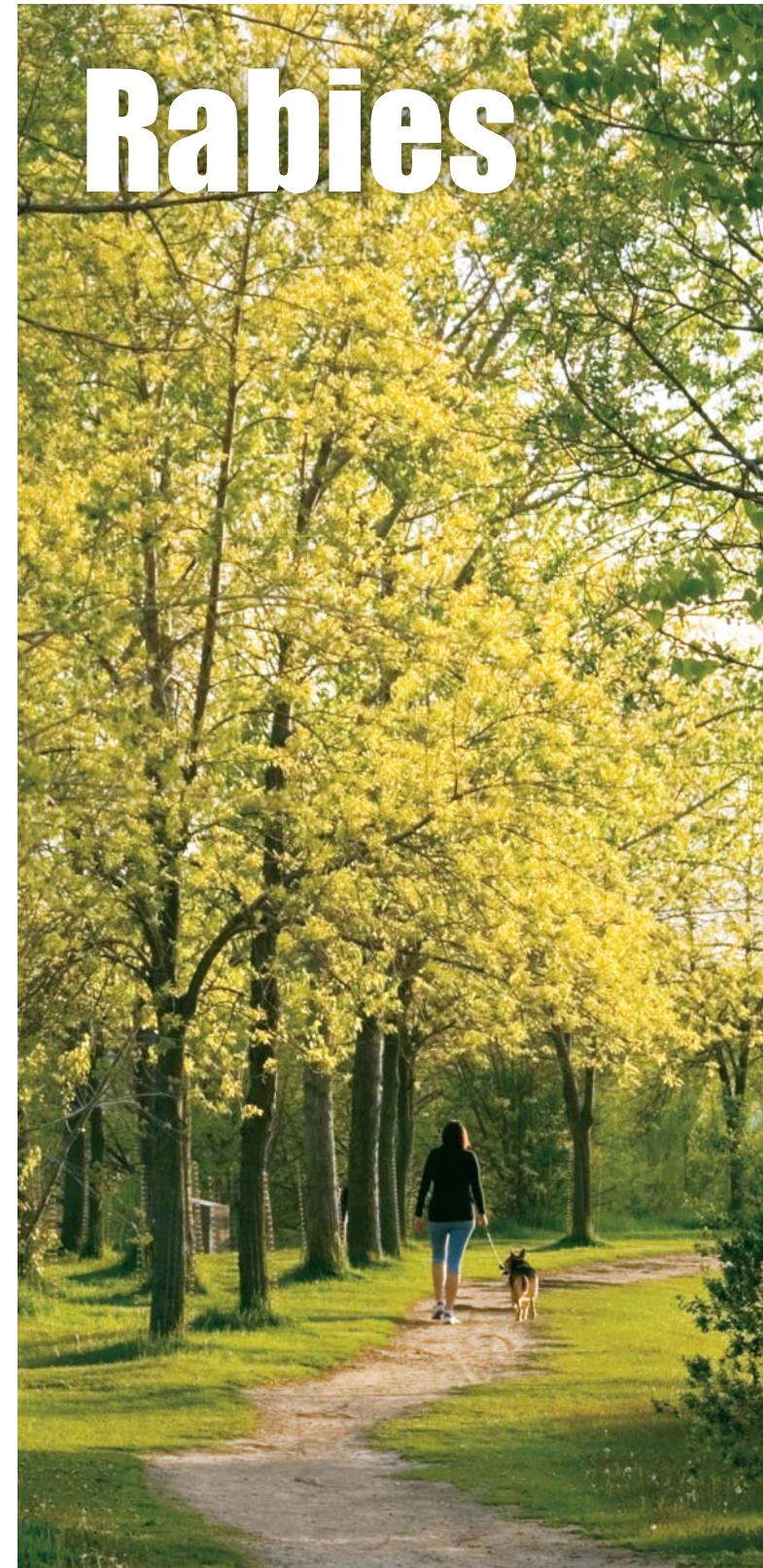
Visit www.gov.ns.ca/hpp/cdpc/rabies.asp or call your local Public Health Services office:

Amherst	667-3319 or 1-800-767-3319
Antigonish	867-4500 Ext 4800
Bridgewater	543-0850
Dartmouth	481-5800
New Glasgow	752-5151
Sydney	563-2400
Truro	893-5820
Wolfville	542-6310
Yarmouth	742-7141

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Rabies



What is rabies?

Rabies is a serious disease of mammals that can be passed to humans. Rabies in humans is rare in Canada, but left untreated it is almost always fatal. Three people have died of rabies in Canada from 1998 to 2010.

Do we have rabies in Nova Scotia?

Yes. Infected bats can transmit rabies to other animals. In the last 10 years, infected bats have transmitted rabies to two foxes and a cat. Bats are believed to be the source of all rabies in Nova Scotia.

In Canada, about 255 animals are found to have rabies each year. Most cases are found in wild animals, especially bats, skunks, raccoons, and foxes. Some cases are found in farm animals, most commonly cows and horses. Some cases are found in pets, especially dogs and cats.

What causes rabies?

A virus causes rabies. It can affect any mammal — humans, pets, farm animals, and wild animals. The virus is most commonly passed on through the bite of an infected animal. The virus lives in saliva and brain tissue. It is also possible to get the virus if saliva or brain tissue from an infected animal enters through the eyes, nose, mouth, or broken skin.

You cannot catch rabies through contact with blood, feces (poop), urine (pee), or by being sprayed by a skunk. You cannot catch rabies by touching the fur of an infected animal. It must be close contact with saliva or brain tissue. Small rodents and rabbits rarely can get rabies, but we have no evidence that they can ever pass it to humans.

What are the symptoms of rabies infection?

Rabies affects the brain.

An animal with rabies may act differently than expected. A calm, gentle animal may become aggressive and try to bite. A wild animal may move slowly and act as if it is tame. The animal may have trouble swallowing, have increased drooling, or appear uncoordinated or lame.

In humans, rabies causes severe agitation, spasms of the throat, confusion, disorientation, coma, and death. Symptoms usually appear one to three months after being bitten by an infected animal.

What is the treatment for rabies infection?

The only treatment is the rabies vaccine, but the vaccine is not routinely given to people. If you were bitten by an animal or were in direct contact with a bat — a bat landed on or touched you — contact Public Health Services. The vaccine must be given before symptoms appear. Once symptoms appear, rabies is almost always fatal, both in humans and animals.

How to treat animal bites

- Wash the bite wound immediately and thoroughly with soap and warm water.
- See your doctor if the wound needs further treatment.

If the biting animal is a dog, cat, or ferret you know well, observe the pet's health and behaviour for 10 days after the bite. If it is normal after 10 days, then there is no risk that the bite could cause rabies.

If you are concerned about the animal's health or behaviour, check with a veterinarian. The veterinarian will contact Public Health Services if they have any suspicion about rabies.

If the biting animal is wild, a stray, not a dog, cat, or ferret, or the owner is unknown, call Public Health Services.

What should I do if I come into contact with a bat?

Did the bat land on you or touch you? You can only be bitten by a bat if it has landed on or touched you. A bite may leave small marks that are hard to see.

If you are bitten by a bat or if saliva or brain tissue from a bat gets into your eyes, nose, mouth, or a wound

- Wash the affected area thoroughly.
- Contact your local Public Health Services office promptly.
- Capture the bat and keep it until Public Health Services can determine if the bat needs to be tested for rabies.

Everyone should leave the room and close the doors and windows so it cannot escape until it can be captured. Public Health Services can give advice on how to safely capture a bat or you can call a private pest control service if you prefer to hire someone to capture the bat for you.

If you find a bat in your home or cottage and no one has been in contact with it, safely encourage it to leave:

- Remove everyone from the room.
- Open windows and doors that lead outside.
- Turn the lights off.
- Leave the room and close the door.