



Rabies is a serious disease that affects the brain. Rabies virus is found in the saliva of an animal with rabies. In the wild, rabies is spread from one animal to another by biting. People can get rabies if they are bitten by an animal that is sick from rabies. In West Virginia, raccoons, skunks, foxes and bats are the most common animals to have rabies. Other wild animals like bears, coyotes and bobcats can also get rabies. Even cats and dogs can get rabies if they do not have their rabies shots. You cannot tell that an animal has rabies just by looking at it; so stay away from wild animals and stray cats and dogs while camping. It is okay to watch wild animals from a safe distance.

## **Bats:**

Most bats are healthy. Bats are part of nature and they eat mosquitoes and other insects. It is normal to see bats flying around as it gets dark. But, some bats do have rabies.

At camp, please tell your counselor if you:

- See a bat lying on the ground. Don't touch it. Warn your friends to stay away from it.
- Find a bat in your cabin or tent.
- Are bitten by a bat.
- Are unsure if you have been bitten by a bat. Bats have small teeth and you may not feel it if they bite you, especially if you are sleeping.

## **Raccoons and Other Wild or Stray Animals:**

Raccoons are a part of nature. But raccoons are also the most common animal in West Virginia to have rabies. Rabies from raccoons can spread to other animals like skunks, foxes, bears, coyotes, and even dogs and cats that do not have their rabies shots.

At camp, please tell your counselor if you:

- See a wild animal or a stray animal near your campsite.
- See a wild animal or stray animal staggering or acting strangely near camp. you are bitten or scratched by a wild animal or a stray animal.

## **How to Be Safe Around Wildlife:**

When you go camping, you are going into the home of wild animals. Follow these instructions to stay safe around West Virginia wildlife:

- Make sure to keep your campsite clean. Do not leave food, trash, or anything smelly out in the open or in your tents. This may attract wild animals to your campsite.
- If you are car-camping, lock food, trash, and scented items in a vehicle when not in use.
- If you are camping and do not have a car, food should be hung in a tree out of reach of animals and away from your tent.



## WILDLIFE SAFETY INFORMATION

www.wvcampsafety.com



- Dispose of trash in animal resistant trash cans.
- Do not feed or try to pet the wildlife even if they seem friendly.
- Always stay with a buddy. Do not hike alone or at night.
- Pay attention when you are in wild areas. Look. Listen.
- Stay with your gear. Don't walk off and leave your packs, food or drinks.
- Stay away from dead animals you find in the wild.
- Stay away from young animals you find in the wild.

### Want to Learn More?

- <http://www.cdc.gov/rabiesandkids/derick.html>
- <http://www.dhhr.wv.gov/oeps/disease/Zoonosis/Rabies/Pages/Rabies.aspx>
- <http://www.cdc.gov/rabies/>