



Rabies:

West Virginia has about 100 cases of animal rabies per year. The most common rabid animals are raccoons, skunks, foxes and bats. Other wild mammals such as bears, bobcats, groundhogs and coyotes sometimes test positive for rabies. Cats and dogs that do not have their rabies shots can also get rabies.

Rabies is a preventable disease that affects the brain. It is fatal with no known cure once a person begins to get ill. Rabies is spread from one animal to another in the wild through biting. Rabies can also spread to people through the bite of a rabid animal.

Management of Animal Bites:

Anyone who is bitten by a wild animal should receive a medical evaluation immediately.

The doctor will:

- Wash the wound carefully
- Determine if rabies vaccination is needed
- Report the bite to the local health department.

The local health department will:

- Determine if the animal should be observed or tested for rabies
- Help and/or advise on observation and testing as needed
- Monitor the situation until resolved

Bats and Rabies:

Most bats are healthy, and bats are a beneficial part of our ecosystem. However, bats can also get rabies.

Teach your child:

- Not to touch or chase bats
- If a bat is on the ground or inside a tent or building, don't touch it. Tell others to stay away. Tell an adult.

Your child should tell an adult right away if :

- He or she is bitten by a bat.
- He or she is unsure if they have been bitten (e.g., had a bat land on him/her).



Rabies in Other Wildlife:

In West Virginia, most cases of rabies occur in wild mammals: raccoons, skunks and foxes. Rabies can only be confirmed with a laboratory test. You cannot tell if an animal has rabies just by looking at it; however, here are some common signs among rabid animals:

- Strange behavior – an animal may act very tame or behave very aggressively.
- Change in voice of the animal.
- The animal is active during a time of day that is not normal (example: raccoons and skunks are normally active at night and not usually seen during the day).
- Drooling or excessive salivation.
- Lack of coordination, such as stumbling or trembling.

Teach your child:

- Not to approach wild animals
- If you see a wild animal, stay away. Tell your friends to stay away. Tell an adult.

Your child should tell an adult and receive medical attention if:

- He or she is bitten or scratched by a wild animal. Your child should tell an adult right away.

Rabies in Dogs and Cats:

Rabies in dogs and cats is very unusual because of the success of animal vaccination programs. However, some dogs and cats may not get vaccinated.

Teach your child:

- Stay away from stray animals.
- Tell an adult right away if you are bitten or scratched by a dog or cat.

Wildlife Safety:

Educate children on the importance of following these simple rules while camping. Although camping is a fun experience, safety is a priority.

- Always keep a clean camp.
- Never leave food lying out.
- Never dump food scraps or other smelly stuff near your camping area.
- When car camping, lock food, trash, and scented items in a vehicle when not in use.
- If you are in the wilderness and don't have a car, food should be hung in a tree out of reach of animals and away from your tent.
- Dispose of trash in animal resistant trash cans.



- Stay with your group.
 - Enjoy wildlife from a safe distance.
 - Never feed wild animals.
 - Never approach young animals.
 - Do not touch dead animals found in the wild.

Additionally, think carefully before bringing your pet camping. If your pet does come with you, make sure they are up to date on their vaccinations and do not let them interact with wildlife.

For More Information on Rabies and Wildlife:

- <http://www2c.cdc.gov/podcasts/player.asp?f=771508>
- <http://www.cdc.gov/rabiesandkids/derick.html>
- <http://www.dhhr.wv.gov/oeps/disease/Zoonosis/Rabies/Pages/Rabies.aspx>
- <http://www.cdc.gov/rabies/>
- <http://www.cdc.gov/rabies/bats/>
- <http://www.wvdnr.gov>
- <http://www.nps.gov>