



# What you should know about Rabies

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Rabies is a potentially deadly virus that is carried in the saliva of an infected animal and spread through contact with open cuts or wounds, or through the mouth, eyes, and nose. The virus then moves through the blood stream into the nervous system, affecting the brain.

Rabies can only be confirmed in a laboratory post mortem by testing brain tissue. However, changes in behavior and temperament are early signs of the disease. Symptoms of Rabies are classified into 3 forms:

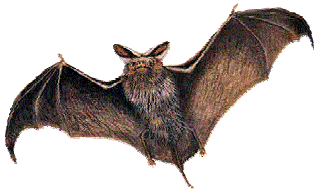


**Prodromal** – the animal is apprehensive, nervous, anxious, seeks solitude and shows fear, and excessively licks or bites the wound.

**Furious** – the more common form includes convulsions, muscular incoordination, extreme irritability, frenzied behavior and foaming at the mouth.

**Paralytic or “Dumb”** – the animal is depressed and may hide and paralysis of the jaw is followed by paralysis of the entire body.

After the onset of any of these symptoms, the disease becomes fatal within 2-7 days. There is no cure for the disease; any treatment is only supportive.



Bats are the #1 vector for transmitting the Rabies virus. Other animals that can also transmit the virus are skunks, raccoons, foxes and coyotes. Groundhogs and woodchucks have also been suspected to be infected with rabies. Any mammal is at risk of becoming infected. Some rodents such as mice, rats, squirrels and others as well as lagomorphs (rabbits and hares) have not been found to be infected with rabies.

Vaccination is available for many animals including large and small animals. The rabies vaccines available in the United States offer either 1 or 3 year protection. Each vaccination protocol differs state to state. **At Newtown Veterinary Hospital we offer a 3 year vaccine.**

The vaccine is required by law and even indoor animals should be vaccinated. Why? Because rabies is a horrible disease and your animal is never 100% protected from intruding animals entering the home or your animal sneaking out of the house. Make sure your animal is protected.

