

When and How to Safely Capture Bats for Rabies Testing

- Bats are an important part of Oklahoma's ecosystem, but some may carry and spread rabies to humans and pets through their bites.
- Bites from bats may not be noticed because their teeth are very small.
- It is important to understand when and how you should capture a bat for rabies testing.
- If you have a bat in your home, call the epidemiologist-on-call, 405.426.8710, before you try to capture or shoo the bat from your home. Then, remove humans from the area where the bat was found.

When should I capture a bat for rabies?

- You know you were bitten or scratched by a bat.
- You or your pet have had direct contact with a bat and are unsure if you were bitten or scratched.
- If you find a bat in the room where you or someone else was sleeping.
- If you find a bat near someone too young or unable to say if the bat made contact with them.

There may be other times that a bat should be captured and tested for rabies. The OSDH Epidemiologist-on-Call, 405.426.8710, can help determine if a bat needs to be tested for rabies.



How to safely capture a bat.

Never handle a bat with bare hands.

Wear leather or thick rubber work gloves.

Wait until the bat has landed, then place an empty can, small box, or food storage dish over the bat. Slide cardboard under the container to contain the bat. Do not use a pillowcase or towel to capture the bat, as this could expose you to rabies..

It is important to not crush or smash the head of the bat while capturing, as the brain needs to be kept in good condition for testing.

Carefully tape the cardboard over the top. Make sure the top is firmly attached to the container so the bat will not escape.

Place the container in a quiet area. If the bat is dead, pick it up with a shovel or dust pan and place it in a container. Place the container in a quiet area.

Always keep the bat in the container until the epidemiologist-on-call decides if the bat needs to be tested for rabies.

If the bat needs to be tested for rabies, the epidemiologist-on-call will talk with you about next steps.

If the epidemiologist-on-call determines there is no need to test the bat, then the bat may be carefully released outdoors.

Questions?

Call the epidemiologist-on-call, 405.426.8710.



If you think direct contact between a bat and a person or pet may have occurred, **do not release the live bat or throw out a dead bat, unless the epidemiologist-on-call has told you** that it will not be necessary to test the bat.

OSDH is not responsible for any injuries that occur while trying to contain a live bat.

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