

## How can I bat-proof my home or cottage?

You can bat-proof your home yourself or hire a private pest control service to do it for you.

To bat-proof your home or cottage:

- Carefully check your house for holes that might allow bats to enter your living quarters. Caulk any openings larger than ¼ by ½ inch (0.5 by 1.0 cm)
- Use window screens, chimney caps, and draft guards beneath doors to attics.
- Fill electrical and plumbing holes with stainless steel wool or caulking.
- Make sure that all doors to the outside close tightly.



Some bats live in buildings. If there is little chance that they will come into contact with people, there's no reason to evict them. However, you should always prevent bats from entering your living quarters.

For more information see: [novascotia.ca/natr/wildlife/nuisance/bats.asp](http://novascotia.ca/natr/wildlife/nuisance/bats.asp)

## How can I 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.

## How can I protect my 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 [novascotia.ca/dhw/CDPC/rabies.asp](http://novascotia.ca/dhw/CDPC/rabies.asp) or call your local Public Health Office:

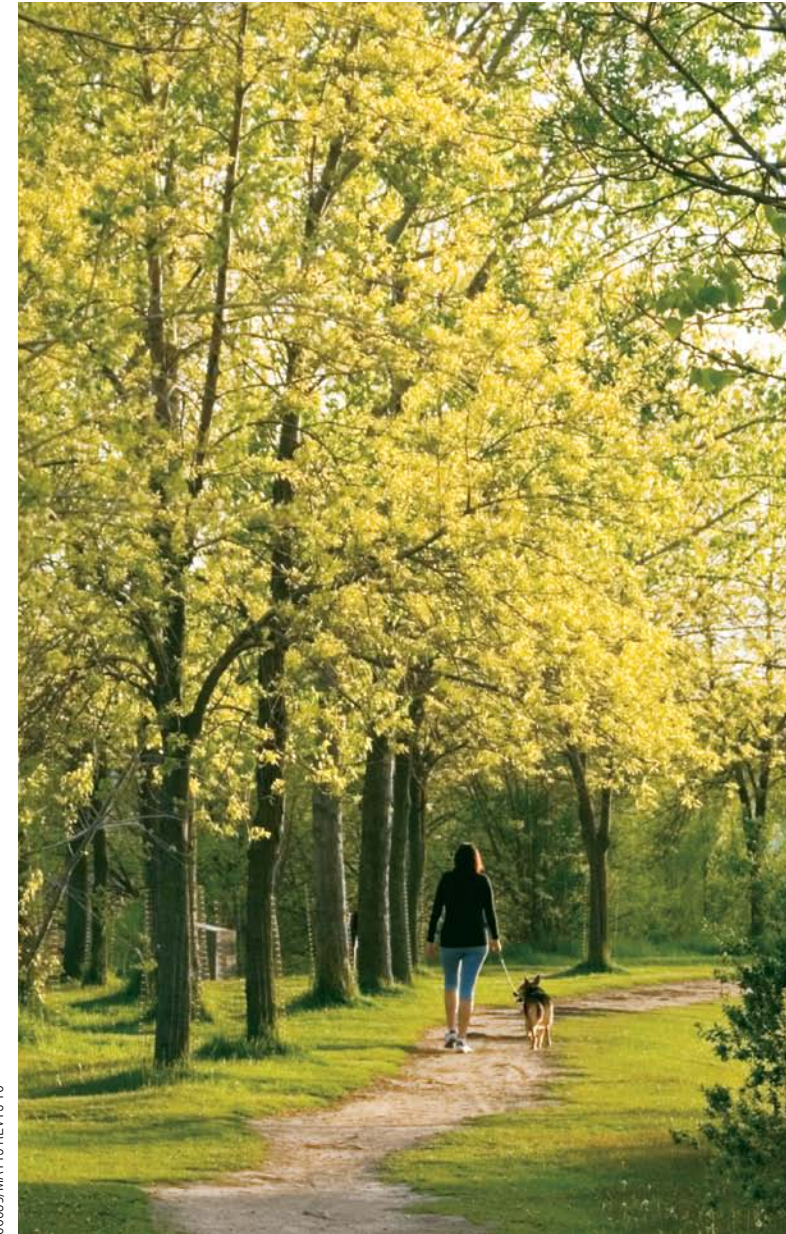
Amherst . . . . .	667-3319 or 1-800-767-3319
Antigonish . . . . .	867-4500 Ext 4800
Bridgewater . . . . .	543-0850
Dartmouth . . . . .	481-5800
New Glasgow . . . . .	752-5151
Sydney . . . . .	563-2400
Truro . . . . .	893-5820
Wolfville . . . . .	542-6310
Yarmouth . . . . .	742-7141

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# Rabies



06039/MAY15 REV15-16



## What is rabies?

Rabies is a disease that can be passed to humans from other mammals. In Canada, rabies is rare in humans, but it is very serious. If rabies is not treated, it is almost always fatal. Between 1998 and 2012, three people have died of rabies in Canada.

## What causes rabies?

A virus that lives in saliva and brain tissue causes rabies. The rabies virus can affect any mammal—humans, pets, farm animals, and wild animals.

The most common way to get rabies is by being bitten by an infected animal. 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), or urine (pee)
- By being sprayed by a skunk
- By touching the fur of an infected animal
- By seeing a bat in your home or in a cave

## Do we have rabies in Nova Scotia?

Yes. Infected bats seem to be the source of all rabies cases in Nova Scotia. In the last 10 years, infected bats have passed rabies to two foxes and a cat.

Across Canada, about 255 animals are found to have rabies each year. Most of these are wild animals, mainly bats, skunks, raccoons, and foxes. Some are farm animals, mostly cows and horses. Some are pets, especially cats and dogs. Rarely, small rodents and rabbits get rabies but we have no evidence that they ever pass it to humans.

## What are the symptoms of rabies?

Rabies affects the brain. Because of this, most symptoms of rabies have to do with changes in behaviour.

An animal with rabies may act differently than usual. A calm gentle animal may become aggressive and try to bite. A wild animal may move slowly and act as if it is tame. An infected animal may also have trouble swallowing, drool more than usual, or look uncoordinated or lame.

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

## Can rabies be treated?

The only treatment is the rabies vaccine. This must be given before symptoms appear. Once symptoms appear, rabies is almost always fatal in both humans and animals.

Because the rabies vaccine is not routinely given to humans, you should contact Public Health:

- If you are bitten by an animal
- If a bat lands on you or touches you

## What should I do for animal bites?

First treat the bite.

- Wash the bite well with soap and water. Do this right away.
- See a health care provider if the wound needs any further treatment.

**If the biting animal is a pet that you know well**—a dog, cat, or ferret—watch its behaviour for 10 days after the bite. If the animal is acting normally after 10 days, then there is no risk that the bite could cause rabies.

If you are worried about the animal's health or behaviour, check with a veterinarian.

**If the biting animal is wild**, a stray, not a dog, cat, or ferret, or if you don't know the owner, call Public Health.

## What should I do if I come in contact with a bat?

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

If a bat bites you or if you get saliva or brain tissue from a bat in your eyes, nose, or mouth, or in a wound:

- Wash the affected area well.
- Contact your local Public Health office right away.

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

- Get everyone out of the room.
- Open windows and doors that lead outside.
- Turn the lights off.
- Leave the room and close the door.

The bat will likely fly out of the room at dusk.

Never kill a bat needlessly. Bats are an important part of our environment. For example, they can eat their weight in insects each night.