

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Riverside County Health Officials Report Increase in Rabid Bats, Urge Precautions for People, Pets

RIVERSIDE, CA (Oct. 28, 2025) – Health officials with Riverside University Health System — Public Health (RUHS-PH) are warning Riverside County residents about the risk of contracting rabies, particularly from bats.

Bats are the most common source of rabies [in the state](#). So far this year, 18 rabid bats have been reported in Riverside County, an increase from 15 rabid bats confirmed by the Public Health lab in 2024.

"Rabies is almost always fatal in humans once symptoms appear. While rabies is extremely rare in humans in California, exposure through bat bites is a serious concern. Bites from a bat can be painless and may not leave marks, so it's important to seek immediate care if you awaken to a bat in your home," said Riverside County Public Health Officer Dr. Jennifer Chevinsky.

To reduce the risk of rabies infection, individuals must:

- Never pick up or touch a bat.
- Vaccinate pets against rabies.
- Report possible exposures to animal control or Public Health.
- Safety proof homes by sealing gaps and openings that could allow bats inside.
- Avoid contact with bats and other wild animals (skunks, raccoons, foxes and coyotes).

Anyone who has interacted with a bat should wash the area immediately with soap and water and seek medical care right away, which includes an assessment for post-exposure vaccination. According to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#), roughly 100,000 Americans receive rabies vaccinations each year after potential exposures.

RUHS-PH partners with California Department of Public Health (CDPH) and Riverside County Department of Animal Services (RCDAS) to monitor rabies activity, raise community awareness and support prevention efforts.

"If a pet contracts rabies, it can take a few days or several months for signs to appear," said Dr. Amy Raines, Riverside County Department of Animal Services Chief Veterinarian. "Never feed or touch wild animals, and make sure pets are protected when outdoors. The best prevention for pets is rabies vaccination, which helps protect pets and the people who love them."

Symptoms of rabies in dogs and cats can include:

- Increased aggression, irritability, or lethargy/unresponsiveness
- Mild fever
- Difficulty walking or lack of coordination

- Drooling or foaming at the mouth due to difficulty swallowing
- Paralysis in the throat or jaw, making it difficult to eat or drink

In Riverside County, all dogs are required to be licensed and vaccinated against rabies which should start at 4 months of age, with regular boosters for life. RCDAS offers low-cost vaccinations at shelter locations by appointment only. Make an appointment today at <https://rcdas.org/pet-services/vaccinations-microchips>.

For questions or local resources, visit www.ruhealth.org/ruhs-public-health or call RUHS –PH Disease Control at 951.358.5107.

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About Riverside University Health System – Public Health

Riverside University Health System – Public Health (RUHS - PH) serves as Riverside County's public health department. RUHS-PH offers a range of services and programs to promote and protect the health of all county residents and visitors in service of the well-being of the community. RUHS includes the 439-bed Medical Center in Moreno Valley, Calif., 14 Community Health Centers across Riverside County, and Behavioral Health, which provides emergency and inpatient psychiatric care. Visit www.ruhealth.org to learn more.