



**Riverside County
Public Health**

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: What is rabies?

A: Rabies is a serious viral infection that can infect humans and animals. It is nearly 100% fatal if not treated prior to the onset of symptoms.

Q: Who can get rabies?

A: Any human or mammal, including bats, skunks, raccoons, foxes, coyotes, cats, dogs, and farm animals can become infected with the rabies virus.

Q: How is rabies spread?

A: The rabies virus is spread through contact with the saliva of an infected animal. Humans and animals can get rabies when bitten by a rabid animal or when saliva or neurologic tissue from a rabid animal enters the eyes, mouth, nose, or a break in the skin. Handling of a rabid bat can lead to rabies infection, even when no noticeable bite wound occurs.

Human to human transmission of rabies is extremely rare, but possible if the saliva or neurologic tissue of an infected person comes into contact with the eyes, mouth, nose, genitals, or a break in the skin of an uninfected person.

Q: How can I protect myself from rabies?

A: You can protect yourself from rabies by avoiding contact with animals that have or are suspected of having rabies. Do not handle bats or other wildlife. If you suspect an animal might have rabies, please contact your local animal control agency.

Domestic animals can transmit rabies between wildlife and humans. Preventative rabies vaccination of dogs is required for dog licensing in Riverside County. For cats and other domestic animals, rabies vaccine is strongly recommended. Low-cost rabies vaccinations for dogs and cats are available through your local animal control agency.

Q: What should I do if I think I have been exposed to rabies?

A: Humans who are bitten by a wild or domestic animal should wash the wounds thoroughly, seek immediate medical attention, contact your local animal control agency and contact the

Riverside County Disease Control Branch at 951-358-5107. If determined necessary by a healthcare provider, rabies vaccine and human rabies immunoglobulin are administered to prevent the onset of rabies in exposed persons.

Humans who have touched, or been touched by, a bat-or for whom direct physical contact cannot be ruled out (e.g. a small child or disabled person found in the presence of a bat), should wash any wounds or recognized points of contact thoroughly with soap and water. If the bat (or other high-risk animal) is available for collection and rabies testing, the local animal control agency should be contacted. If not, it is important to seek medical attention and contact Riverside County Disease Control Branch at 951-358-5107.

Q: What should I do if I think my pet has been exposed to rabies?

A: If a domestic animal is bitten by another animal, or found in the presence of a bat, its owner should contact their local animal control agency and have any injuries evaluated by a veterinarian.

Q: What are the symptoms of rabies?

A: *A rabid animal may have symptoms such as:*

- Behavior changes, including depression and aggression
 - In wildlife, loss of fear of humans or disruption of normal day/night cycle (e.g. a nocturnal animal active in the daytime)
- Gait/postural changes
- Decreased appetite
- Excessive salivation

Days, weeks, or months after an untreated rabies exposure, humans may develop symptoms such as:

- Irritation, prickling or itching sensations at the site of the bite
- Fever, headache
- Confusion, anxiety, stress and tension
- Impaired swallowing

In both humans and animals, symptoms of rabies nearly always proceed quickly to death. No reliable treatment is available for humans or animals after rabies symptoms appear.

Adapted from Contra Costa Public Health Communicable Disease Programs (10/4/2012).

Riverside County Animal Services

Blythe Animal Shelter - (760) 921-7857
245 S. Carlton, Blythe, CA 92225

Coachella Valley Animal Campus - (760) 343-3644
72-050 Pet Land Place, Thousand Palms, CA 92276

San Jacinto Valley Animal Campus - (951) 358-7387
581 S. Grand Avenue, San Jacinto, CA 92582

Western Riverside County/City Animal Shelter - (951) 358-7387
6851 Van Buren Boulevard, Jurupa Valley, CA 92509

Other Animal Services/Shelters in Riverside County

Animal Friends of the Valleys - (951) 674-0618
33751 Mission Trail, Wildomar, CA 92595

City of Beaumont Animal Control Services - (951) 769-8500
550 E. Sixth Street, Beaumont, CA 92223

City of Corona Animal Services - (951) 736-2309
1330 Magnolia Avenue, Corona CA 92879

Moreno Valley Animal Services - (951) 413-3790
14041 Elsworth Street, Moreno Valley, CA 92553

City of Norco Animal Control - (951) 737-8972

City of Palm Springs Animal Control - (760) 323-8151
200 South Civic Drive, Palm Springs, CA 92262

City of Perris Animal Control - (951) 657-4134

City of Rancho Mirage Code Compliance & Animal Services - (760) 770-3220

Ramona Humane Society - (951) 654-8002
690 Humane Way, San Jacinto, CA 92582