



Maricopa County
Animal Care and Control

RABIES: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW



WHAT IS RABIES?

Rabies is an infectious viral disease that affects the nervous system of humans and other mammals. It is almost always fatal once symptoms appear. Individuals exposed to a rabid animal, usually through a bite or scratch, must receive anti-rabies serum and vaccine soon after contact to prevent rabies infection. The most important global source of rabies in humans is from uncontrolled rabies in dogs. That can be eliminated through ensuring adequate animal vaccination and control, educating those at risk, and enhancing access of those bitten to appropriate medical care.

DETECTING RABIES:

In Arizona, rabies most commonly occurs in bats, skunk and foxes, but any mammal can contract the disease. Rabid animals may appear unstable or show unusual behavior. They may become aggressive and may attempt to bite people, pets and livestock. Wild animals exhibiting unusual behavior, such as no fear of people; nocturnal animals out during the day; and bats found on the ground should be reported to local animal control officials.

RABIES PREVENTION:

Rabies prevention starts with the animal owner. Protect yourself, your pet and your community by taking animals to be vaccinated. Be safe when you are enjoying the great outdoors.

Whether you are hiking, camping, or biking, avoid stray animals and wildlife. This means your pets too. Keep them inside a fenced backyard. And when you do take your dogs out, keep them on a leash where you can see them. Dogs get curious and could run off. You don't know what is out where you can't see.

WHAT TO DO IF BITTEN:

If you are bitten, wash bite wounds with soap and water and seek medical attention immediately. If your pet is bitten, consult your veterinarian immediately. Prompt and appropriate treatment after being bitten and before the disease develops can stop rabies infection and/or prevent the disease in humans and animals.

PROTECT YOURSELF & PETS:

- Get them vaccinated
- Keep your dogs on a leash
- Keep your cats and ferrets inside
- Avoid contact with wildlife

BAT BITES:

A majority of rabies cases involve bats. If you see a bat out, do not try to catch it or pick it up. Leave roosting bats alone. If it's on the ground, put something over it to contain it (also so no animal or child comes in contact with it), and report it to your local health department or animal control.

Bat bites can be hard to detect. If you have come in contact with a bat, go to the doctor right away. The Department of Health Services reports, "...transmission of rabies virus can occur from minor, seemingly unimportant or unrecognized bites from bats. In the US, human fatalities associated with rabies occur in people who fail to seek medical assistance, usually because they were unaware of their exposure."

This does not mean bats are bad. They play a key role in the desert ecosystem by eating insects, including agricultural pests, and by seed dispersal and pollination. The best protection we can offer these unique mammals is to learn more about their habits and recognize the

THE LAW:

Maricopa County Animal Care and Control enforces a strict law when it comes to rabies prevention. All dogs over the age of three months must have an updated rabies vaccination and a Maricopa County dog license. A.R.S. 11-1008 & 11-1010

Rabies vaccines are \$34 and can be administered at either of MCACC's Animal Care Centers. They are \$20 all day on Sundays and Tuesday— Thursday mornings from 9—11 a.m. Dog licenses are \$17 for sterilized dogs and \$42 for unaltered dogs. Seniors can pay \$6 for up to two sterilized dogs. For more information visit our web site at pets.maricopa.gov

If your dog does bite somebody, he will have to be held on a rabies quarantine for 10 days. If your records are up-to-date, the quarantine may qualify to be at home. The Enforcement Agency will determine qualifications. If not, then the shelter or your veterinarian will hold the dog and fees will be involved.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Arizona Game & Fish Department
5000 W. Carefree Highway
Phoenix, Arizona 85086
General and Public Information:
(602) 942-3000

Arizona Department of Health Services
150 North 18th Avenue
Phoenix, Arizona 85007
General and Public Information:
(602) 542-1000; Fax: (602) 542-0883

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More than 55,000 people die from rabies each year worldwide. That's one person every 10 minutes!