What constitutes a rabies exposure?

An exposure is any penetration of skin by the teeth of a potentially rabid animal or contamination of scratches, abrasions, open wounds or mucous membranes with saliva or other potentially infectious material (such as brain or nervous tissue) from a potentially rabid animal.

Questions to ask:

• When and where (location) did the exposure occur?
• What was the source animal species? Was it a high-risk or low-risk species? Low-risk* but acting unusual?
• Can the exposed person positively identify the source animal?
• Is the source animal available? If so, has Animal Control been contacted for capture and testing?
• What were the circumstances of the exposure: Provoked or unprovoked?
• Was there exposure to rabies virus as defined above? If so, exposed person should contact a healthcare provider.

Is post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) needed?

**High-risk:** Raccoon, skunk, fox, bat, large carnivore (e.g., bobcat), large rodent (e.g., groundhog, beaver).

**Low-risk:** Small rodent (e.g., squirrel, mouse, rat, mole, hamster, guinea pig), lagomorph (rabbit).

*If the test results are Unsatisfactory or Test Not Performed call 919-733-3419 for assessment.*

---

**Bats**

Was there direct physical contact with a bat? Or, has a bat been found in a room with a sleeping or unconscious person, a young child, or a person who is not able to affirm that no direct contact occurred?

**YES**

Call Animal Control to capture and submit bat for testing. Was bat captured and tested?

**YES**

START PEP.

**NO**

STOP - PEP may not be needed. Call 919-733-3419 for further assessment.

**TEST RESULTS †**

**POSITIVE**

START PEP.

**NEGATIVE**

STOP - PEP not needed.

---

**Other Wild Animals**

Was there an exposure to a high-risk* animal or a low-risk** animal that was ill, injured, acting strangely or died?

**YES**

Call Animal Control to capture and collect animal for testing. Was the animal captured?

**YES**

Can it be tested in a timely manner?

**YES**

START PEP.

**NO**

START PEP.

**TEST RESULTS †**

**POSITIVE**

START PEP.

**NEGATIVE**

STOP - PEP not needed.

**NO**

START PEP.

---

*If the test results are Unsatisfactory or Test Not Performed call 919-733-3419 for assessment.*