

# Knox Public Health

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## **Second bat tests positive for rabies**

Knox Public Health has confirmed that a bat found in a Howard Township home has tested positive for rabies. This is the second confirmed case of rabies this year, both cases involve bats. The first case was in Gambier in June.

The bat was found in the bathroom and thought to be dead, but proved otherwise when the resident attempted to collect the bat. "Even though a bat might be motionless, never assume it is dead," said Registered Sanitarian Terri Hillier with Knox Public Health. "Always use caution when trying to collect it, including wearing gloves."

The residents were able to safely catch the bat and bring it to the health department where it was sent to the Ohio Department of Health for testing.

Since the bat was found in the bathroom and not a bedroom, no human exposure is suspected. "All of the pets on the property had been vaccinated, so there is no need to quarantine them," said Hillier who conducts most of the rabies investigations.

While there is a rabies vaccine for pets, there is not a rabies vaccine for humans. "Catching an animal suspected of rabies is important so that it can be tested and the need for treatment determined," said Director of Environmental Health Nate Overholt, R.S. "In most cases, bat-related post-exposure treatments can be avoided if the bat is captured and tested."

There is no charge to submit a bat for rabies testing. The health department is open Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. If the bat is caught on the weekend, Overholt advises putting it in a container and keeping it in a cool location until it can be brought to the health department. Or contact law enforcement which can contact Knox Public Health to come pick up the bat

To catch a bat, you will need leather work gloves, a small box or coffee can, a piece of cardboard and tape. When the bat lands, approach it slowly, while wearing the gloves, and place the box or coffee can over it. Slide the cardboard under the container to trap the bat inside. Secure the lid with tape. If the bat is alive, make sure to punch small air holes in the lid. Be carefully not to shake or otherwise traumatize the bat as this can damage the brain, rendering it untestable for rabies. If the bat is dead, keep it cool but avoid freezing it.

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Rabies is an infectious viral disease that affects the nervous system of humans and other mammals. It can only be confirmed by laboratory testing. Rabies is usually fatal to animals. While there is early treatment for adults, there is no treatment for an animal infected with rabies. Bats are just one of a few animals that are common carriers of rabies. Other animals that can have rabies and transmit it to humans are raccoons, foxes, skunks and coyotes.

For more information on rabies, check the Knox Public Health website at [www.knoxhealth.com](http://www.knoxhealth.com), or contact Overholt at the health department at 392-2200, Ext. 2228 or [noverholt@knoxhealth.com](mailto:noverholt@knoxhealth.com).

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