

Knox Public Health

www.knoxhealth.com • 11660 Upper Gilchrist Rd., Mount Vernon, OH 43050 • 740-392-2200

**For Immediate Release
June 3, 2020**

**For more information, contact Pam Palm,
740-507-6533 or ppalm@knoxhealth.com**

Bat tests positive for rabies

Knox Public Health has confirmed that a bat found in a residence near Gambier has tested positive for rabies. This is the first confirmed case of rabies in Knox County since 2018.

The bat was discovered flying in the home at night. 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.

According to Director of Environmental Health Director Nate Overholt, R.S., the residents have been advised to continue medical treatment for potential exposure to rabies.

“People usually know when they have been bitten by a bat, for example when they are trying to capture it. That wasn’t the situation with this case where the bat was captured safely. However, there are times when they might not be aware they have been bitten,” said Overholt. “Because bats have small teeth which may leave marks that are not easily seen, there are situations in which you should seek medical advice even in the absence of an obvious bite wound.”

Those situations would include: when a bat is found in a room with a sleeping person; when a bat is found in proximity to an unattended child who is not able to describe what happened; or when a bat is found in a room with an individual under the influence of alcohol or drugs or with other sensory or mental impairment.

“It is usually much easier to determine the rabies status of a bat which has potentially exposed someone to rabies than to determine the likelihood of the actual exposure,” said Overholt. “So in circumstances where there is a chance of exposure, people are advised to capture the bat and call the health department. 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 an air-tight container and refrigerating it 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

-MORE -

Page 2 – Bat tests positive for rabies

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. Tape the cardboard to the container securely, and then contact the health department to make arrangements for rabies testing.

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, or contact Overholt at the health department at 392-2200, Ext. 2228 or noverholt@knoxhealth.com.

###