

## WORST-CASE SCENARIO®

# HOW TO SPOT A RABID ANIMAL

- 1 Watch out for raccoons, skunks, and bats.**

All warm-blooded animals can carry rabies, but the disease is most common among these animals. Coyotes, foxes, and larger rodents, such as ground-hogs, can also carry rabies. It is rare among mice, squirrels, chipmunks, guinea pigs, hamsters, rabbits, rats, and other small rodents.
- 2 If the animal is foaming or appears to have a locked jaw, stay away.**

There are two type of rabies: “furious” rabies and “dumb” rabies. Animals with the former are hostile, may snap and bite, and have an increase in saliva, which makes their mouths appear to be foaming. Animals with the latter (also called paralytic rabies) are timid and shy, and may have paralysis of the lower jaw and muscles.
- 3 If you are bitten by any animal, immediately wash the bite out with soap and running warm water.**

The wound can also be treated with an antiseptic such as hydrogen peroxide or an antibiotic ointment. Dress the wound with a sterile cloth or bandage, and put pressure on the wound to stop bleeding. Get professional medical attention as soon as possible.

**4** **Call animal control authorities to report the incident.**

Describe the animal and where you were when you received the bite so that they can try to catch the animal. Tests will determine if the animal has rabies. Without the animal to test, the medical treatment may mean painful injections, since health providers will have to assume the animal had rabies. Do not try to catch the animal yourself.

**5** **Monitor your health.**

Early symptoms of rabies include mental depression, restlessness, and abnormal sensations such as itching around the site of the bite, headache, fever, tiredness, nausea, sore throat, or loss of appetite. Other early symptoms include muscle stiffness, dilation of pupils, increased production of saliva, and unusual sensitivity to sound, light, and changes of temperature. Symptoms usually develop within two to eight weeks after infection. The more severe the bite, the sooner the onset of symptoms.

**Be Aware**

Generally, you will know if a wild animal has bitten you. However, bat bites can be small and may not be felt. A bat that is active by day, that is found in a place where bats are not usually seen, or that is unable to fly is far more likely to be rabid.

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