Public Health
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Champaign-Urbana Public Health District

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 1, 2022

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Second Bat Tests Positive for Rabies in Champaign County

Champaign-Urbana Public Health District Encourages Awareness of Rabid Animals

CHAMPAIGN, IL – The Champaign-Urbana Public Health District (CUPHD) urges the public to be aware of rabid animals, in particular bats, after two bats in Champaign County have tested positive for rabies over the past several months.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), rabies is a fatal but preventable viral disease. It can spread to people and pets if they are bitten or scratched by a rabid animal. In the United States, rabies is mostly found in wild animals like bats, raccoons, skunks, and foxes. However, in many other countries dogs still carry rabies, and most rabies deaths in people around the world are caused by dog bites. Rabies can be prevented by vaccinating pets, staying away from wildlife, and seeking medical care after potential exposures before symptoms start.

People usually know when they've been bitten by a bat, but the bite mark from a bat may be hard to see. If you find yourself in close proximity to a bat and are unsure if you were exposed, for example, you wake up to find a bat in your room, do not kill or release the bat before calling your doctor or local health department to help determine if you could have been exposed to rabies and need preventive treatment (i.e. vaccines or other products to stop you from getting rabies). If the bat is tested and the results are negative, preventive treatment is unnecessary.

If a bat enters your home or work area, the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) states, it will need to be captured. To capture the bat, try to confine it to a room. If you can do it safely, trap the bat in a box and slide cardboard underneath. Wear leather gloves when doing this and avoid any skin contact with the bat. Call the local health department or animal control to help determine the next steps. If you do not feel comfortable capturing the bat or cannot do so safely, contact the Champaign County Animal Control for assistance.

Additional information on rabies, visit: https://www.cdc.gov/rabies/index.html.

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