

## What should I do if I find a live bat in my home?

If a bat is found in your home and you are sure no exposure has occurred (human or pet), confine the bat to a room by closing all doors and windows leading out of the room except those to the outside. If the bat is healthy, it will escape. If there is any question of exposure, leave the bat alone and call:

- \* **Humane Society of the Pikes Peak Region** (719) 473-1741
- \* **Division of Wildlife** (719) 227-5200

**Do not attempt to capture the bat!**

## What if I have contact with a bat?

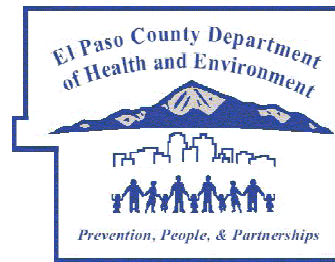
If you are bitten by a bat or if saliva from a bat gets into your eyes, nose, mouth or a wound, wash the area thoroughly and get medical attention immediately. When possible, the bat should be captured by a professional and sent to the El Paso County Department of Health and Environment for rabies testing.

Sometimes people know when they have been bitten by a bat. But bats have small teeth and their bites may not show. If in doubt, seek medical advice. For example, if you awake in the morning to find a bat in your bedroom or in the room of a child, seek medical advice and have the bat tested.

People **cannot** get rabies from seeing a bat in an attic, in a cave or at a distance. People also cannot get rabies from having contact with bat guano (feces), blood or urine.

## How can I help control rabies?

- Keep vaccinations on dogs, cats and ferrets up to date.
- If your pet is attacked/bitten by a wild animal, report it to the El Paso County Department of Health and Environment. Make sure that your dog, cat or ferret receives a booster vaccination.
- Limit the possibility of exposure by keeping your animals on your property. Don't let pets roam free. Also, don't leave garbage or pet food outside. It may attract wild or stray animals.
- Remember, wild animals should not be kept as pets. Enjoy wild animals from a distance.
- **Do not** pick up or handle bats — or any wildlife.
- Learn more about non-lethal means to remove bats from your home and how to bat-proof your home from the Colorado Division of Wildlife, (719) 227-5200.



This pamphlet was produced by the El Paso County Department of Health & Environment's Environmental Quality Program  
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# Facts about Bats and Rabies



**El Paso County Department  
of Health and Environment**

## What is rabies?

Rabies is a virus that affects the central nervous system of mammals, causing encephalitis — a fatal inflammation of the brain and spinal cord. Rabies virus is found in the rabid animal's saliva and is spread most commonly through a bite. It also is possible to get the virus when saliva from an infected animal gets into open wounds, cuts or mucous membranes, such as eyes, nose and mouth. The incubation period — the time from exposure to the first symptoms — can vary greatly from 30 to 90 days.

## Bats in Colorado

Eighteen bat species are known to live in Colorado. They can be found in every environment, from the eastern plains to the high mountain forests and western deserts, from rural Colorado to downtown Denver. All Colorado bats eat insects; they play a valuable role in the environment by helping to control insect populations. Here are a few of the most common bats in El Paso County.

### *Hoary Bat*

These bats are the most widespread of all bats in the United States. Hoary bats also are Hawaii's only native land mammal. Humans rarely see these bats because they are not attracted to houses and keep themselves well-hidden in plants and trees throughout the day. They typically roost in trees along forest borders. The hoary bat has a body size of a fat mouse and a wingspan of around 17 inches.



A little brown bat

### *Little Brown Bat*

These bats are especially associated with humans, often forming nursery colonies containing hundreds, sometimes thousands of individuals in buildings, attics and other man-made structures. They are about 2 inches long and weigh only about half an ounce. These bats are very common in El Paso County.

### *Big Brown Bat*

Relatively fast fliers who can reach speeds of up to 40 miles per hour, the big brown bat also feeds mostly upon beetles. These large bats are about 3 inches long with medium-sized ears. These bats are found in virtually every American environment, ranging from timberline meadows to lowland deserts, though they are most abundant in forest areas.

### *Silver-Haired Bat*

These bats are among the most common bats in forested areas of America, especially in areas of old growth. The silver-haired bat is mainly solitary and a slow flyer. They are usually 3½ to 4½ inches in length and have a wingspan of 12 inches.

## Bats and wildlife carry rabies

In the United States, raccoons, skunks, bats, foxes and coyotes are the main carriers of rabies, in that order. However in Colorado and El Paso County, bats have been the primary rabies carrier for many years. The last raccoon to test positive for rabies was in Boulder County in 1963. Similarly, the last cat to test positive was from Grand County in 1985. Yet, El Paso County has bats that test positive every year. Remember that the vast majority of bats are never found and tested. Studies suggest that less than 1 percent of all bats are infected with rabies.

## How can I tell if a bat has rabies?

Confirmation of rabies can only be found in a laboratory. However, any bat that is out during the daytime, is found in a place where bats are not usually seen (i.e., rooms of your home or on the lawn), or is unable to fly, is far more likely than others to be rabid. These unnatural behaviors can make a bat very easy to approach. Remember, it's best never to handle any bat.