

A Guide for Victims of Animal Bites



1. Immediately wash the bite with soap and water to reduce the risk of rabies.
2. See your doctor.
3. You will need a tetanus/diphtheria booster if it has been more than 5 years since your last one.
4. You may need antibiotics, as animal bites frequently cause infection.
5. You may need rabies shots if the animal that bit you is not available for quarantine or rabies testing. Rabies is fatal and vaccine should be started within 72 hours.
6. Report the bite by calling Washburn County Public Health at 715-635-4400 or law enforcement.
7. If the animal is domestic (ex: dog or cat) Washburn County Public Health will quarantine the animal for 10 days. If the animal shows any symptoms of rabies, you will be notified so you can begin the rabies vaccine. The animal will be euthanized and the brain sent in for testing. If the results are negative, the vaccine can be stopped.
8. If the animal is wild (ex: raccoon, skunk, fox, bat, wolf hybrid) and was not captured, you should contact your doctor immediately to start the rabies vaccine.
9. If the animal is wild and has been captured, call the Spooner Veterinary Clinic at 715-635-2874 to arrange for the animal to be sacrificed and sent in for rabies testing. Do not kill the animal unless it is the only way to capture it. Do not damage the head, as the brain must be intact for rabies testing. Refrigerate (do not freeze) the dead animal until it can be taken to the Spooner Veterinary Clinic.