

Rabies FAQs



My dog/cat/ferret bit a human in Washburn County. What happens next?

Call local law enforcement. An officer will meet with you and collect information about the event. The animal may be ordered for a 10-day quarantine from the day of bite. During the quarantine, veterinary (vet) and/or trained observer checks must be completed.

What happens if I choose not to follow the ordered quarantine and vet check requirement?

Failure to follow the requirements may result in a citation up to \$1,000.00 and/or imprisonment up to 60 days per Wis. Stat. §95.21(10).

What happens if my family dog/cat/ferret bites a family member?

The same process. Any bite has the potential risk of passing rabies to the victim.

What happens if I get bit by a stray and no one can catch/trap it?

You will be told to call your primary care provider to discuss your rabies risk and the rabies post-exposure treatment.

Why is my dog being ordered for a 10-day quarantine when it's up-to-date on its rabies vaccination?

Not every vaccine works 100%. There is still a chance your animal can have the virus. Per Wis. Stat. § 95.21, a dog/cat/ferret is still required to be quarantined for 10-days regardless of vaccination status if it bites a human.

If the animal was up-to-date on its rabies vaccination at the time of the bite, it may be allowed to serve its quarantine at the home.

If the animal was NOT up-to-date on its rabies vaccination at the time of the bite, then the animal will serve its quarantine at an isolation facility, such as the Washburn County Humane Society or a vet clinic with boarding space.

Can I choose not to do the 10-day quarantine, and instead ship my dog/cat/ferret to be shipped for testing?

Yes, but the owner is responsible for all fees associated per Wis. Stat. § 95.21 (8)

What happens if I am not sure which of several dogs bit me in a scuffle?

Notify law enforcement of this uncertainty so that they may issue a quarantine on multiple animals if needed.

In the process of euthanasia, the animal bit someone. What should I do?

Report the incident of local law enforcement. The dog/cat/ferret should be tested for rabies to make sure that the victim has no risk of rabies.

Who is responsible for all vet, quarantining and shipping associated fees?

The owner of the offending animal is responsible for all vet and shipping fees per Wis. Stat. § 95.21 (8). The rabies testing fee is typically waived by the state when a human has been exposed to rabies.

Where does the rabies testing take place?

The Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene (WSLH) in Madison, WI.

I found a bat in my house. What do I need to do?

Contact us at (715) 635-4400 to assess whether a potential exposure occurred. The bat should be delivered to Washburn County Public Health (WCPH) to have it tested at the Wisconsin State lab of Hygiene (WSLH) if you answer "yes" to any of the following:

- The bat was found in the same room as a sleeping/incapacitated adult
- The bat was found in the same room as a young child
- A person came in direct contact with the bat

My dog/cat killed a bat. What should I do with the bat?

If a domestic animal was exposed to a potentially rabid animal (e.g. a bat, skunk, raccoon, etc.), please call Washburn County Public Health at (715) 635-4400. A staff member will assess the risk.

If a potential exposure occurred, the domestic animal may be ordered for a quarantine. The potentially rabid animal will be shipped to the WSLH for rabies testing. If the result is negative for rabies, then the quarantine may be rescinded.

Dogs/cats/ferrets exposed to a potentially rabid animal may be ordered for a 60-day or 180-day quarantine based on the domestic animal's rabies vaccination status at time of exposure. In either case, the domestic animal must get a rabies vaccination as soon as it is safe to do so. The owner of the domestic animal is responsible for all fees associated with this process.