



# Tioga County Public Health Department

Lisa C. McCafferty, R.S., MPH; Public Health Director



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

## Bats and the Risk of Rabies

### **Have you ever wondered what you would do if you woke up and found a bat in your house?**

While finding a bat doesn't necessarily pose a threat, and should not cause panic, a bat in your home could potentially be a serious and deadly problem. If you find a bat and have been bitten or are unsure if you have been bitten, you need to take action immediately as the bat could have rabies.

### **So what should you do if you find a bat in your house?**

The best thing to do is to safely catch the bat and contact your Tioga County Public Health immediately to get it tested for rabies. There are several different ways you can catch a bat. One way is to use a butterfly net, but not a fishing net, as the bat can easily escape a fishing net. You can also use a coffee can, small garbage can, or similar container and trap the bat against the floor or wall, and safely slide a piece of wood to trap the bat. Do not let the bat outside and do not smash its head; this will prevent testing, and a pre-cautionary rabies shot may need to be given to you, your family, and your pets.

Rabies has a 100% fatality rate! If you or your family members have been bitten by a bat, or another animal that has rabies, then a 4 shot series is necessary to protect you from this deadly virus. The first shot will be given immediately, with the other shots to follow on day 3, day 7 and day 14. If you are ever unsure about what to do, always call Tioga County Public Health for advice to ensure you and your family are protected from rabies!

### **Resources**

<https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/zoonoses/rabies/>

<https://www.cdc.gov/rabies/index.html>

