



## **WHAT CAN PEOPLE DO TO PROTECT THEMSELVES AGAINST RABIES**

Be sure your pets: dogs, cats and ferrets are up-to-date on their rabies vaccinations. Vaccinated pets serve as a buffer between rabid wildlife and man. Protect them, and you may reduce your risk of exposure to rabies. Vaccines for dogs, cats and ferrets after three months of age are effective for a one-year period. Revaccinations are effective for up to three years. Pets too young to be vaccinated should be kept indoors.

Don't attract wild animals to your home or yard. Keep your property free of stored bird seed or other foods that may attract wild animals. Feed pets indoors. Tightly cap or put away garbage cans. Board up any openings to your attic, basement, porch or garage, and cap your chimney with screens.

Bats can be particularly difficult to keep out of buildings because they can get through cracks as small as a pencil. Methods to keep bats out (bat-proofing) of homes and summer camps should be done during the fall and winter months. If bats are already inside your attic or other areas of your home, consult with your local health department about how to remove them from your residence.

If a wild animal is on your property, let it wander away. Bring children and pets indoors and alert neighbors who are outside. You may contact a nuisance wildlife control officer who will remove the animal for a fee.

### **REPORT ALL ANIMAL BITES**

It is important to report all animal bites or contact with wild animals to your local health department. Don't let any animal escape that has possibly exposed someone to rabies. Depending on the species, it can be observed or tested for rabies in order to avoid the need for rabies treatment. This includes bats with skin contact, or found in a room with a sleeping person, unattended child, or someone with mental impairment. Bats have small, sharp teeth and in certain circumstances people can be bitten and not know it.

- Encourage children to immediately tell an adult if they are bitten by any animal. Tell children not to touch any animal they do not know.
- Don't leave family pets outside at night or unattended during the day. Don't let them roam free.
- Don't try to separate two fighting animals. Wear gloves if you handle your pet after a fight.

For more information, or to answer any questions regarding wild or domestic animal exposures, upcoming free Rabies Clinics, how to capture a bat safely for testing, what do with wild animals on your property, or any animal related inquiries, call

**Sullivan County Public Health Services 845- 292-5910**

Sullivan County Public Health is located in Liberty at 50 Community Lane.

To hear about other services offered at Public Health, call the **Health Information Line 845-513-2268**