

# INFORMATION RABIES

Direction de santé publique de la Montérégie

October 2024



The *Direction de santé publique de la Montérégie* (DSPu) would like to remind you to be vigilant about the dangers of rabies in the event of exposure to wild animals (bats, skunks, foxes and raccoons), as well as domestic animals (cats and dogs) that display abnormal behaviour and that could be infected.

## What is the rabies virus?

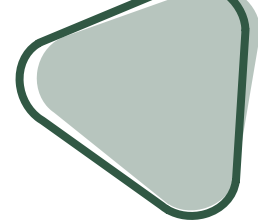
- The rabies virus is only found among mammals. Rabies can be transmitted from mammal to mammal and to humans. It is a fatal brain disease for humans.
- Wild mammals in Quebec (e.g.: bats, skunks, foxes and raccoons) are the main source of the rabies virus.
- Fortunately, there is a vaccine against rabies which, when administered **after** contact with an infected animal, prevents the disease from developing.

## How is rabies transmitted?

- Rabies is transmitted by a bite or scratch from an infected animal. It can also be transmitted by the saliva of an infected animal that comes into contact with an unhealed cut or a mucus membrane (e.g.: mouth, eye, nose).
- Wild animals can transmit rabies directly to humans or indirectly by infecting domestic animals which can then transmit rabies to humans.
- In Quebec, there are 8 species of bats. In all regions of Quebec, all the species of bats are at high risk of being infected with the rabies virus.

## How to protect yourself?

- Never touch a wild animal, even a dead one. To dispose of a carcass, try to use rigid objects (broom, box) or thick gloves.
- Remember, never touch a bat whether it is alive or dead.
- Be careful about any contact with a bat: a cut, bite or anything else from a bat can sometimes go undetected.
- All physical contact with a bat must be carefully assessed. Bats can even bite through bags and some gloves.



- Advice for parents of young children:
  - ❖ Question your own or any child to find out if there has been physical contact with a wild animal (including bats) or a domestic animal.
  - ❖ Teach children the steps to take in the presence of an unknown animal: not to feed, touch or approach it and inform an adult about its presence. Never touch a bat.
- Vaccinate your pets against rabies in consultation with your veterinarian.
- Consult a veterinarian if your pet has been bitten by or come into contact with a wild animal that can potentially transmit rabies.
- Take steps to avoid attracting wild animals to your property (e.g.: store your garbage cans out of the reach of animals).
- Do not transport wild or unwanted animals because you could be spreading diseases like rabies to another region.
- Given that there are cases of rabies present in the United States close to the border with the Montérégie, it is important to report any raccoon, skunk or fox found dead or behaving suspiciously (wounded, sick, disoriented, abnormally aggressive or paralysed).
  - ❖ Where to make a report: [Report a dead or sick raccoon, skunk or fox - Ministère des Forêts, de la Faune et des Parcs \(gouv.qc.ca\)](https://www.mffp.gouv.qc.ca/fr/actualites/actualites/2019/04/20190410-rapport-rabies)

### What to do in case of a bite, scratch or other contact

- Anyone who has touched a bat or been touched by a bat and cannot exclude a bite, scratch or contact with the saliva of the animal must:
  - ❖ Wash exposed skin for 10 to 15 minutes with soap and water as soon as possible after contact;
  - ❖ Call Info-Santé 811 immediately because a rabies vaccination may be needed depending on the situation;
  - ❖ If the person was exposed at a daycare or school (or if there is any concern following exposure to an animal), quickly alert a responsible individual at the facility who will contact the DSPu;
    - If the situation occurs on a weekend, call Info-Santé at 8-1-1 for more information.
  - ❖ Catch the bat in a safe manner to prevent anyone else coming in contact with it and to have it analysed if necessary. (see [Watch out... A bat! What if it had rabies... - Pamphlet - Publications the ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux \(gouv.qc.ca\)](#)). The animal can be analysed to assess the risk of rabies and the need for vaccination.
- Rabies is rare in humans. Thanks to early intervention in the case of a bite or scratch from a bat or other animal, no one has died of rabies in Quebec since 2000!



MORE INFO

Consult the :

- Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux website (Publications)  
[Transmission de la rage par les chauves-souris - Publications du ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux \(gouv.qc.ca\)](#) (French only)  
[Procédures à suivre pour le nettoyage d'un milieu contaminé par des déjections de chauve-souris - Publications du ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux \(gouv.qc.ca\)](#) (French only)
- Gouvernement du Québec website (Quebec.ca)  
[Preventing health problems caused by bats](#)
- Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation du Québec website : (MAPAQ)  
[Avis aux personnes concernées par l'adoption de chiens du Nord-du-Québec](#) (French only)

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