



CLAY COUNTY

PUBLIC HEALTH CENTER



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Rabid Bat Confirmed in Clay County

LIBERTY, Mo. – July 26, 2019 – The Missouri State Public Health Laboratory has confirmed that a bat recently found in Clay County tested positive for rabies. Clay County Public Health Center would like to remind the community of the risk of exposure to rabies due to contact with bats.

Rabies is an acute viral infection of the central nervous system that can be spread through saliva from the bite or scratch of an infected animal. It is nearly always fatal if left untreated. In 2008, a Missouri resident died from rabies due to a bat bite.

“It is important to remember to avoid contact with wild animals, especially bats and skunks, as they can carry rabies even if they do not appear sick,” said Ashley Wegner, section chief, Health Planning and Policy. “If you believe you have been exposed to a rabid animal, seek immediate medical attention from a health care provider.”

To keep your family safe, make sure all indoor and outdoor pets are up-to-date on their rabies vaccinations and do not allow pets to run loose. Keep a safe distance from all wild animals but wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water if you do touch a wild animal. Citizens can report wild animals exhibiting unusual behavior to animal control officials in your community.

When it comes to bats, their small teeth may not always leave an obvious bite mark. It is best for anyone who may have come into contact with a bat to seek medical advice. Prevent bats from coming into your home by covering or filling holes larger than a quarter-inch that would allow them access to spaces like an attic.

About Clay County Public Health Center

Created in 1953, the Clay County Public Health Center is a nationally accredited local public health department protecting the health of all people in the county by implementing population-based prevention programs and services. This community approach to wellness not only prevents the spread of disease but also provides wellness education to empower people to make healthy choices. To learn more, visit clayhealth.com.

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The mission of the Clay County Public Health Center is to deliver the essential public health services of prevention, promotion and protection to the communities of Clay County.