



Oregon State Public Health Laboratory has confirmed a positive bat for rabies that was found in Tillamook on September 3, 2009. This is a reminder to stay away from bats which may be sick, flopping around, or acting otherwise unusual. Most human exposures to bat rabies occur because someone decided to handle an obviously sick bat. While bats play a valuable role in nature, contact with humans should be avoided.

If you do have an exposure (e.g. bite) from a bat, immediately clean the wound and contact the Tillamook County Health Department at 503.842.3900. **If the bat has been captured, do not crush the bat or throw it away, as intact bats can be tested for rabies**, which can avoid post exposure rabies shots. If you have had contact and are unsure if you have been bitten contact the Health Department.

To protect your dog and cat, make sure their rabies vaccinations are up-to-date. Dogs and cats that do not have current vaccinations are subject to euthanasia or six month quarantine under Oregon law. If the bat is available, it can be tested for rabies at the animal owner's expense (currently \$70). It is very important that pet owners visit their veterinarian and get their pets vaccinated for rabies.

In Oregon, there is an average of about 9 positive rabies tests per year (mostly bats). Tillamook County has had 1 positive bat in the last 10 years. About 10% of the bats tested for rabies are positive. However, typically only bats that appear ill are tested, so the actual infection rate is likely lower than 10%.

Bats are a critical part of our ecosystem. They remove millions of mosquitoes and other insects from our environment providing an important ecological service. Unfortunately, due to habitat loss most species of bats are now listed as Sensitive Species in Oregon.

For information regarding rabies, visit the following website:

[Oregon Public Health Authority - Rabies](#)