



## THE BASICS: RABIES & YOUR DOG

### WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Rabies is a **viral disease that attacks the nervous system and is almost always fatal** once symptoms appear. It can affect any mammal, including dogs and people. Rabies is most commonly transmitted through the bite or saliva of an infected animal.

- Rabies is preventable through vaccination, but once clinical signs develop, there is no treatment or cure.
- In Oregon, bats are the primary carriers of rabies. Every year, approximately 10% of bats tested for rabies in Oregon test positive.
- Oregon law requires all dogs to be vaccinated against rabies at 6 months of age or older.
- Vaccinating your dog not only protects your dog, but also creates a critical buffer zone between your family and rabid wildlife.
- Rabies is a zoonotic disease, meaning it can be transmitted from animals to people. Nationwide, thousands of people receive post-exposure treatment each year after potential rabies exposure.



### WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Visit [oregonvma.org](http://oregonvma.org) or [cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov) and search "Rabies"

## RABIES & OREGON LAW

- Oregon state law requires rabies vaccination for all dogs.
- Unvaccinated dogs that may have been in contact with a rabid animal must be vaccinated and quarantined for four months or euthanized. The contact animal is considered rabid unless it is tested and confirmed negative.
- Vaccinated dogs exposed to a rabid animal must be revaccinated immediately, kept under the owner's control, and quarantined for 45 days.
- If you plan to travel with your dog to other states or out of the country, most destinations require proof of a current rabies vaccination. Oregon requires that animals over four months old entering the state have a current rabies vaccine.

## SYMPTOMS OF RABIES

Rabies symptoms in dogs may develop gradually and can include:

- Changes in behavior (a normally friendly dog may become aggressive, or a normally active dog may become withdrawn)
- Excessive drooling or difficulty swallowing
- Staggering or loss of coordination
- Paralysis, often starting in the hind legs
- Seizures
- Extreme sensitivity to light, touch, or sound



If your dog is displaying unusual behavior or you suspect rabies exposure, contact your veterinarian immediately.

## PREVENTING RABIES

- Keep your dog's rabies vaccination current. Your veterinarian will advise you on the appropriate schedule.
- Avoid contact with wild animals, especially bats, raccoons, skunks, and foxes. Do not attempt to handle or approach wildlife that appears sick or is behaving in an unusual way.
- Do not let your dog roam unsupervised, and keep them away from wildlife, especially bats.
- If you find a bat out during daylight hours, it is most likely unhealthy. Do not touch it. Contact your local animal control or the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.
- Feed your pets indoors and keep garbage in secure containers to avoid attracting wildlife.
- Seal any openings in attics, basements, porches, or barns that could provide access to bats.

## WHAT TO DO IF YOUR DOG IS EXPOSED

If your dog has been bitten by or had contact with a wild animal (especially a bat), take these steps:

- Contact your veterinarian immediately.
- If possible, safely contain the animal without direct hand contact (e.g., use gloves or a tool such as a shovel). Do not kill or dispose of the animal, as it may need to be tested for rabies.
- Report the incident to your local animal control or law enforcement.
- If your dog's rabies vaccination is current, your veterinarian will advise on revaccination and monitoring. If your dog is not vaccinated, quarantine and/or euthanasia requirements may apply.

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