



Disease Control Branch
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RABIES ADVISORY

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Nine bats in Riverside County have tested positive for rabies thus far in 2012, with 10 bats testing positive in 2011. No other animals tested positive for rabies in 2011 or so far in 2012. With the start of the summer season and the inevitable increase in outdoor activities there are more opportunities for the public to come in contact with wild animals.

In California, rabies is found primarily in wild animals, with **bats and skunks** being the common reservoir. Rabies is occasionally detected in other wild animals such as coyotes, foxes, and raccoons. Domestic animals such as dogs, cats, horses, and cattle are infrequently diagnosed with rabies. Small rodents (e.g., squirrels, hamsters, guinea pigs, gerbils, chipmunks, rats, and mice) and lagomorphs including rabbits and hares are almost never found to be infected with rabies. These animals have not been known to transmit rabies to humans.

The Riverside County Department of Public Health can be consulted before a decision is made to initiate post exposure prophylaxis for low risk animals such as rodents.

Though rabies is rare in humans, when it does occur it is most often fatal. In California, seven cases of human rabies have occurred since 2001, all but one of these cases died. The human rabies case that survived was an eight year old girl with probable exposure to feral cats. No human rabies cases have been reported in Riverside County to date.

Rabies prophylaxis is a series of four vaccinations (five injections are recommended for immune compromised patients) along with rabies immune globulin (RIG) which should be given within the first seven days post-exposure. Rabies vaccine and immune globulin are manufactured by Sanofi Pastuer and Norvatis.

For recommendations regarding the administration of rabies vaccine and immune globulin, you can contact Riverside County Department of Public Health Disease Control Branch at (951) 358-5107, Monday through Friday, 8-5:30 pm. After hours, please call (951) 782-2974.