



# News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Animal Control

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## Animal Control Issues Reminder Following Dead Bat Report

FAYETTEVILLE – A dead bat found in a north Fayetteville home this week was not able to be tested by the State Public Health Lab in Raleigh because the brain cavity was too dry. This is not being considered a new rabies case. However, Animal Control Director Dr. John Lauby wants to remind citizens to immediately contact Animal Control if they see a bat in their residence.

The dead bat was picked up by Animal Control at Bay Shore Drive off of Shoreline Drive in College Lakes and sent for testing. The residents told Animal Control they had seen a bat in the kitchen three or four weeks ago, but did not call the department until they discovered a dead bat this week.

Since Jan. 1, there have been 17 cases of rabies in the county and eight of them were bats.

**All pet owners are urged to check the vaccination status of their pets. If pets are not vaccinated or are due for a booster shot, they should be taken to a local veterinarian for rabies vaccination immediately.**

The first sign of rabies in animals is a change in behavior. Animals may become aggressive, attacking for no reason, or they may become very quiet. Wild animals can lose their fear of people and act tame. Rabid animals may walk in a circle, drag a leg, or fall over. Some cannot swallow so they are not able to eat or drink and often drool. Animals usually die within a week after first becoming ill.

Avoiding wild animals and keeping your distance from stray dogs and cats is the first step in preventing an animal bite. Any pet, which appears to have been in a fight while outside, should be handled very cautiously and seen by a veterinarian.

If you are bitten or scratched by an animal:

- Immediately wash the wound under running water for at least 10 minutes with lots of soap. Seek medical attention/advice.
- Call Animal Control at 321-6852 Monday-Friday 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Call the Sheriff's Office at 323-1500 after 5 p.m., weekends and holidays.
- Go to the emergency room.

It is also important to vaccinate your pets for rabies and keep their shots current. Pet owners are reminded that all dogs and cats must be vaccinated against rabies, as required by state law. Pet owners are subject to a fine of \$100 for each unvaccinated dog or cat. Pets must be vaccinated when they reach the age of four months.

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