



COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

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CARLOS J. PALACIOS, COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

NEWS RELEASE



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HEALTH ALERT: RABIES POSITIVE BAT FOUND IN SOQUEL

The Santa Cruz County Health Services Agency and Santa Cruz County Animal Shelter have confirmed that a bat found in the Soquel area has tested positive for rabies. A dog had made contact with the bat, but thankfully was fully vaccinated. This serves as an important reminder to the community about the dangers of rabies and the steps everyone should take to protect themselves, their families, and their pets.

Rabies is a fatal disease and can be transmitted to humans from animals, but it is preventable through proper vaccination. While people don't generally have to be vaccinated against rabies, pets are more likely to have contact with wild animals that may carry the disease and should be vaccinated.

RABIES PREVENTION TIPS

Ensure Pets are Vaccinated: Although California law only requires that dogs be vaccinated against rabies, it is critical that all dogs, cats, and other pets susceptible to rabies receive rabies vaccinations and proper boosters. Contact your veterinarian to find out if vaccination is recommended for your pet or confirm the status of your pets' rabies vaccines.

Avoid Contact with Wildlife: Do not handle, feed, or attract wild animals to come into close range of you or your pets. Wild animals are often unintentionally attracted by open garbage cans or pet food left outdoors. Bats, raccoons, skunks, and foxes are the most common carriers of rabies. If you see an animal acting unusually such as appearing friendly, fearless, disoriented, or aggressive, keep your distance and report it to Animal Control at 831-454-7224. If the animal is acting aggressive or if unqualified people are trying to handle the animal, call 911.

What to Do If Exposed: If you or a family member have been in contact with a bat or any wild animal, especially if it appears sick or abnormal, contact your healthcare provider immediately for advice, and call Animal Control with information about the suspected animal. If your pet has had contact with a wild animal, consult your veterinarian as soon as possible and alert Animal Control.

For more information, please visit <https://www.cdc.gov/rabies/about/index.html> or <http://rabiesaware.org>.