



# WARREN COUNTY HEALTH DISTRICT

416 South East Street – Lebanon, Ohio 45036

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## For Immediate Release

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The Warren County Health District (WCHD) was notified on July 31, 2019, that a bat collected in the county had tested positive for rabies. There was one potential human exposure to the bat. Rabies is a viral disease present in mammals that is most frequently transmitted through the bite of a rabid animal. The virus acts by infecting the central nervous system and causing disease in the brain and ultimately, death. Symptoms of rabies in humans include fever, headache, and general weakness or discomfort early on and can progress to anxiety, confusion, hallucinations, hypersalivation, and hydrophobia. Once the infection has progressed to this point death frequently occurs within days. Most (95 percent) bats tested at the ODH Laboratory are negative for rabies. Rabies is a preventable disease and the risk of infection can be dramatically reduced by:

- Keeping household pets safe by:
  - Ensuring that pets susceptible to rabies such as dogs, cats, and ferrets have their vaccinations up to date.
  - Maintaining control of your pets by supervising dogs and keeping cats and ferrets indoors.
  - Contacting animal control authorities to assist in the removal of stray animals from neighborhoods.
  - Spaying or neutering your pets to prevent or reduce the number of unwanted pets that may not receive proper rabies vaccination.
- Keeping bats from getting into buildings by:
  - Making sure windows have screens, chimneys are capped, and electrical and plumbing openings are plugged.
  - Keeping unscreened doors or windows closed sealing all openings into the attic, basement, walls or occupied areas of the house that are larger than ½ inch by ½ inch. Use materials such as expanding spray-on foam, caulk, wire mesh, wood that fits tightly, steel wool (around pipes that enter buildings) or polypropylene bird netting to seal or cover gaps and holes.
- Determining whether bats are already in a house by:
  - Listening for squeaking noises coming from the attic, walls or elsewhere.
  - Examining attic space, rafters, porches and walls for signs of roosting bats (e.g., evidence of bat guano and crystallized urine, or bare scratched areas on beams).
  - Watching outside of the house at dusk to see if bats are flying out of the house to feed, or before dawn to see if bats are flying into the house to roost.
- Getting bats out of a house in which they are roosting or entering by using bat exclusion techniques instead of killing the bats. Killing or poisoning bats is seldom necessary or desirable.
  - Sealing openings. Openings should not be sealed while bats are inside--this may drive them into occupied areas or create a sanitary problem when they die.
  - Waiting to begin major home renovations and sealing in the winter when most bats have left buildings.
  - Using special netting in a manner that allows bats to exit the house, but not to re-enter.
  - Consulting with a licensed pest control expert specializing in bat control.
- For more information please visit our website at [www.warrenchd.com](http://www.warrenchd.com) or our Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/WCCHD.Ohio](https://www.facebook.com/WCCHD.Ohio).