

# What Is Rabies?

Rabies is a viral disease that causes severe inflammation in the brain and spinal cord of mammals.

## How Does Rabies Spread?

Rabies is transmitted through contact with infected animals.<sup>1</sup> **Bites. Saliva. Scratches.**

## What wildlife species pose a rabies risk to pets?<sup>2</sup>



Bats



Raccoons



Fox



Skunk

## Why Do Indoor Pets Need Protection?

Not only can indoor pets get out, rabid animals can get in. Bats are known to nest in attics and can expose a pet inside the house. Your pet can also be exposed if guests bring pets of unknown vaccination status into your home or if stray animals come in your house, porch or garage. Even a brief encounter with an infected animal can be deadly for your pet.

## Can Rabies Be Prevented?

Besides vaccinating your pets, there are things you can do to help prevent the spread of rabies.

- Don't leave animal feed or water for pets outside.
- Keep garbage securely covered.
- Use caution around unfamiliar animals and wildlife.
- Report suspicious acting strays to authorities.

## What Else Should I Know?

### It's Out There

In 2015, nearly 420 domestic animals within the U.S. tested positive for the rabies virus.<sup>2</sup>

Rabies is a preventable disease which occurs in more than 150 countries and territories around the world.<sup>1</sup>

### It's a Real Risk

In 2015, cats accounted for more than half of the cases of rabies reported in domestic animals in the U.S.<sup>2</sup>

The number of rabid cats is more than three times the number of rabid dogs in the U.S.<sup>2</sup>

### It's Fatal

There is no cure or treatment for rabies.

Once clinical signs occur, an infected animal usually dies within 7 days.<sup>3</sup>

**Talk to your veterinarian about vaccinating your dog, cat or ferret against rabies.  
For more information, visit [VaccinateYourPet.net](http://VaccinateYourPet.net)**

<sup>1</sup> Rabies. World Health Organization. <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs099/en/>. Updated March 2017. Accessed May 11, 2017.

<sup>2</sup> Birhane MG, Cleaton JM, Monroe BP, et al. Rabies surveillance in the United States during 2015. *JAVMA*. 2017;250(10):1117-1130.

<sup>3</sup> The Path of the Virus. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [www.cdc.gov/rabies/transmission/body.html](http://www.cdc.gov/rabies/transmission/body.html). Updated April 22, 2011. Accessed May 11, 2017.