



North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services  
Office of Public Affairs

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## Bats In Your Attic? Be Aware Of Rabies, Health Risks

RALEIGH — During the height of summer and mosquito season, bats flying through the night sky are typically a welcome sight. But when bats venture indoors, it may be a different story. While the insect-eating mammals are very important to maintaining ecosystems worldwide, they also can transmit rabies and respiratory disease to humans. The North Carolina Division of Public Health suggests taking precautions to protect yourself and your family:

- If you awaken to find a bat in your room, tent or cabin, do not release it. Instead, contact your local animal control to have it captured and tested for rabies.
- Seek medical advice immediately. Bat bites can be difficult to detect and may not cause a person to wake from a sound sleep. If you have had any contact at all with a bat, even if you do not think you have been bitten, you must still talk with a physician. You may have been exposed to rabies.
- If you know you have been bitten, thoroughly wash the wound with soap and water before seeing a doctor.
- Never handle a bat with your bare hands. If you need to capture it before animal control arrives, follow safety guidelines as outlined in <http://www.cdc.gov/rabies/bats/contact/capture.html>. A video demonstration is available at <http://batcon.org/index.php/bats-a-people/removing-a-bat.html>.
- If bat or bird droppings have caused accumulations in an attic for example, care should be taken to avoid stirring up and breathing the dust. Fungal spores in the droppings may cause disease when inhaled by some people. For more information, see <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2005-109/>

If you have bats roosting in an unoccupied portion of your home during the summer months, you may be advised to allow them to remain for a short time as long as the bats can be excluded from living areas. The N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC) recommends that exclusion of bats from the entire structure (attics, crawl spaces, etc.) not be performed from May 1 through August 1 because breeding colonies may be present. Removing bats during this time may compound the risk to your health because dead pups unable to fly will remain in walls and attics and mother bats will try to create new entry points to reach them. Removal, or exclusion, may also be illegal if it results in the death of young bats, some of which may be federally protected under the Endangered Species Act.

To prevent bats from entering your home, examine your home carefully and seal openings in doors, windows, attics and chimneys that may allow bats access to your living spaces. You may also wish to consult with a trained and licensed Wildlife Damage Control Agent for assistance. A county-by-county listing is available at [http://www.ncwildlife.org/Nuisance\\_Wildlife/Nuisance\\_Contact\\_WDCA.htm](http://www.ncwildlife.org/Nuisance_Wildlife/Nuisance_Contact_WDCA.htm).

For more information on rabies in North Carolina and links to current rabies data, visit <http://www.epi.state.nc.us/epi/vet.html>.

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Location: 101 Blair Drive • Adams Building • Raleigh, N.C. 27603

[www.ncdhhs.gov](http://www.ncdhhs.gov)

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