



PRESS RELEASE

BAT FOUND IN FOUNTAIN VALLEY TESTS POSITIVE FOR RABIES

(Santa Ana, CA) – A bat found at a parking lot located at Pickleball Court #1 at the Fountain Valley Tennis Center, 16400 Brookhurst Street in the City of Fountain Valley, on Wednesday, September 14, 2022 at around 10:30 a.m., has tested positive for rabies. Given the location and circumstance, the OC Health Care Agency (HCA) is urging residents to be on the alert and avoid contact with any bats. Rabid bats are identified routinely each year in Orange County and around the country. Contact with bats should be avoided and any potential bat bite should be discussed with a medical provider.

Anyone who may have had physical contact with this bat or saw someone else having contact with the bat is asked to call the HCA Health Care Agency (HCA) Communicable Disease Control Division at (714) 834-8180 to determine the risk for rabies. Owners of pets who may have had contact with this bat should contact their veterinarian.

The rabies virus is found in an animal's saliva and is transmitted to people by a bite from a rabid animal. Although very rare, contamination of the eyes, mouth or an open wound by the saliva of a rabid animal can also transmit rabies. Most cases of human rabies in the United States in recent years have resulted from bat strains of rabies; bats have very small teeth, and their bites may go unnoticed.

Once a person begins showing signs and symptoms of rabies, the disease is nearly always fatal. For that reason, preventive treatment to stop the rabies virus from causing illness is given to anyone who may have been exposed to rabies. Medical assistance should be obtained promptly after an exposure so any wound can be cleaned and preventive treatment can be started. This treatment is safe and effective.

The HCA and OC Animal Care recommend the following actions to minimize the risk of rabies:

- Avoid all contact with wild animals.
- Vaccinate all cats and dogs against rabies.
- Do not sleep with open unscreened windows or doors.
- If bats are seen inside the house or other structure, close off the area and contact animal control. Once the bat(s) have been removed, close off any areas allowing entrance into the house.
- Do not leave pet food outside where it will attract wild animals.
- Immediately wash all animal bites with soap and water, being sure to flush the wound well, then contact your doctor.

- Report all animal bites to OC Animal Care.
- Report stray animals to OC Animal Care.

Potential exposure to a bat or other wild animal should be reported to the HCA Communicable Disease Control Division at (714) 834-8180. To report a bat in your home, an animal bite, or a stray animal, contact OC Animal Care at (714) 935-6848.

More information about rabies is available at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at <http://www.cdc.gov/rabies>.

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