

## News Release

April 15, 2026

### Rabid bat found in Southwest Utah

ST. GEORGE, UT - The Southwest Utah Public Health Department (SWUPHD) has confirmed that a bat found recently in Washington County has tested positive for rabies.

Bats are the primary carrier of rabies virus in Utah, and this is the first rabid bat detected in the state this year. Residents are reminded to avoid contact with bats or any other wildlife, since you can get rabies from any infected animal.

“Rabies becomes fatal once symptoms start”, says Adrianna Vidal, SWUPHD Epidemiologist. “But getting a rabies vaccine early enough can save your life. That’s why it’s so important to get immediate medical care if you think you might have been bitten or scratched by a rabid animal.”

Utah law requires all pet dogs, cats, and ferrets to be immunized against rabies, so humans are most at risk of rabies exposure from wild animals they may encounter.

To prevent rabies infection:

- Keep your distance from wild animals.
- Never handle a wild animal with bare hands.
- Make sure your pets are up to date on vaccinations.
- Call Animal Control officials to report stray or wild animals that are acting strangely.
- If you are bitten by any animal, immediately wash the wound with soap and water and seek medical care. Contain or capture the animal if it can be done without further injury to yourself or others so it can be tested to determine if you should get the rabies vaccine.
- Seek immediate medical attention if you suspect you may have been exposed to a rabid animal, even if you’re unsure if you were bitten or scratched. If you have physical contact with a bat or awaken to find a bat in your room, assume you’ve been bitten.

Visit [swuhealth.gov/rabies](http://swuhealth.gov/rabies) for more information.

*The mission of the Southwest Utah Public Health Department is to protect the community’s health through the promotion of wellness and the prevention of disease. Visit our website at [www.swuhealth.gov](http://www.swuhealth.gov).*

###