



SUSANA MARTINEZ, GOVERNOR

CATHERINE D. TORRES, M.D., CABINET SECRETARY

NEW MEXICO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
Secretary Catherine Torres, M.D.

For immediate release:  
September 3, 2011

Contact: Aimee Barabe  
Cell: 505.470.2290

**Rabies Confirmed in Bats from Bernalillo and Doña Ana Counties**  
*Department of Health urges vaccination of pets and livestock*

(Santa Fe) – The New Mexico Department of Health is warning the public, including pet and livestock owners, in Bernalillo and Doña Ana Counties and throughout the state to make sure their dogs, cats, horses, and other valuable livestock are vaccinated against rabies. In the past week, one bat from Bernalillo County and another from Doña Ana County tested positive for rabies at the Department of Health public health laboratory.

The rabid bat in Bernalillo County bit an adult within Albuquerque city limits. This person is now receiving the series of post-exposure rabies vaccinations. No people or animals are known to have been exposed to the bat that tested positive from Doña Ana County. Proper precautions need to be taken to ensure that there is no spreading of rabies. “In New Mexico, bats, skunks and foxes are reservoirs for rabies and can transmit rabies to people, pets, livestock or other wild animals. We urge everyone to vaccinate their pets and livestock against rabies; vaccination is one of the most effective public health tools we have to prevent humans from being exposed to rabies. If you are exposed to a rabid animal, please seek the attention of a healthcare provider immediately,” said Department of Health Cabinet Secretary, Dr. Catherine Torres.

This year, there have been ten rabid animals reported in New Mexico including the rabid bats in Doña Ana Bernalillo Counties, six rabid skunks (four in Eddy County, one in Chaves County and one in Lincoln County), a rabid horse in Eddy County, and a rabid dog in Roosevelt County. It is essential for pet owners to vaccinate their pets and to seek veterinary care if any of their pets become ill, especially if they have had contact with any wild animals including skunks and bats. Sometimes it is difficult to know if a bat has actually come in contact with a person. For this reason, the Department of Health recommends that anyone who suspects possible contact with bats should seek medical advice immediately.

The following guidelines can help protect you and your family from rabies:

- Stay away from wild or unfamiliar animals. Do not attempt to feed, approach, or touch wild animals (alive or dead). Teach this important message to your children and keep a close eye on your kids at all times.



Office of the Secretary  
1190 St. Francis Drive, N4100 • P.O. Box 26110 Santa Fe, New Mexico • 87502-6110  
(505) 827-2613 • FAX: (505) 827-2530 • <http://www.nmhealth.org>

- If you see a sick or dead wild animal, or a wild animal acting abnormally, report it to your local animal control authorities. Rabid animals may show no fear of people and may even seem friendly or become aggressive.
- Keep pets on a leash at all times. Pets should be up to date on rabies vaccinations and wearing current license tags on their collar. If your cat or dog has been bitten or scratched, call your pet's veterinarian, even if the wound is minor.
- Horse and livestock owners should consider vaccinating their animals against rabies.
  
- If you are bitten or scratched by a wild animal or a pet, the Department of Health recommends the following guidelines:
  - o Wash all wounds and contact areas thoroughly with soap and water.
  - o Contact a healthcare provider immediately for evaluation. The Department of Health is available to providers for consultation about rabies 24/7 at (505) 827-0006.
  - o Call the local animal control department to report the incident and provide the department with an accurate description of the animal.
  - o Try to keep the animal confined, but don't risk further injury if the animal is dangerous.
  - o Keep children away from all animals involved in the incident

For more information about rabies visit the Department of Health's website at <http://nmhealth.org/ERD/HealthData/rabies.shtml>.

###