



Shawnee County Health Department

**Shawnee County Health Department**  
Teresa Fisher, Director  
2600 SW East Circle Dr., Topeka, KS 66606  
Ph. 785.251.5600 | Fax 785.251.5696  
[www.shawneehealth.org](http://www.shawneehealth.org)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**CONTACT: Craig Barnes**  
Division Manager/PIO  
Office (785) 251-5612  
Mobile (785) 806-6310

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Bat Tests Positive for Rabies in Shawnee County**

**Topeka, Kan.** – A bat sent for testing has come back positive for rabies in Shawnee County. The Shawnee County Health Department (SCHD) is encouraging residents to be aware of the signs and symptoms of rabies and the steps to take if exposure is suspected. Rabies is a fatal but preventable viral disease that is typically transmitted by raccoons, bats, skunks and foxes.

The first symptoms of rabies include general weakness or discomfort, fever or headache, and may last for days. Discomfort or itching of the bite site, progressing within days to symptoms of cerebral dysfunction, anxiety, confusion and agitation may then develop. Progression of the disease may result in delirium, abnormal behavior, hallucinations and insomnia. Once a person begins to exhibit signs of disease, survival is rare.

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) offers the following tips to help prevent rabies:

- Have your veterinarian vaccinate all dogs, cats, ferrets, horses and valuable breeding stock and show animals (cattle and sheep) against rabies.
- If bitten by an animal, seek medical attention and report the bite to your local public health department or animal control department immediately.
- If your animal is bitten, contact your veterinarian or local health department for advice.
- If you wake up in a room with a bat present, even if there is no evidence of a bite or scratch, seek medical attention.
- Do not handle or feed wild animals. Never adopt wild animals or bring them into your home.
- Do not try to nurse sick wild animals back to health. Call animal control or an animal rescue agency for assistance.
- Teach children never to handle unfamiliar animals, wild or domestic, even if they appear friendly.

Rabies vaccination is a four shot series over 14 days. The first shot must be administered through a primary care office or emergency room, which is known as day zero. Shots are received on day zero, the third day, seventh day and fourteenth day. The remainder of the series can be obtained at the SCHD's immunization department at 2115 SW 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue; questions about receiving the vaccination can be made by calling the SCHD immunization department at 785-251-5700. If a person has not previously been vaccinated against rabies, they may also need to receive a human rabies immune globulin (HRIG) vaccination at the time of the first vaccination of the series.

For more information on rabies visit these links on [exposure](#) and [prevention](#) from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

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*Shawnee County Health Department is committed to working in partnership with our community to promote and protect the optimal health of all people by bridging gaps to eliminate health inequities, respecting the diversity of our community, through adaptive and innovative processes.*

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