



# ONEIDA COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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"PROMOTING & PROTECTING THE HEALTH OF ONEIDA COUNTY"

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## News Release

**Date 06/12/20  
For Immediate Release**

**Contact: Megan Graziano  
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## Bat Tests Positive for Rabies in Town of Vienna

A bat has tested positive for rabies in the Town of Vienna. The bat was sent to the New York State Department of Health Wadsworth Center for testing and positive results were reported on Wednesday, June 10th. One child had exposure to the bat and received post exposure prophylaxis.

Rabies is a rare disease in humans; however, one or more fatal human cases do occur almost every year in the United States, predominantly from rabid bat exposures. Director of Health, Phyllis D. Ellis, BSN, MS, FACHE explained, "Rabies is preventable. It can be prevented by vaccinating your pets, avoiding wildlife and if you have been exposed, by seeking medical care".

Human contact with bats typically happens when a pet brings home a sick or dead bat, or when a bat enters a home through small openings or open windows. "Bats in your home present a particular concern. If you find a bat in the living spaces of your home do not let it escape. The bat should be captured using extreme care to avoid contact. Once captured, contact the Oneida County Health Department for instructions on what to do next" according to Daniel W. Gilmore, Ph.D., MPH, Environmental Health Director.

Even though the bat may appear healthy, it may be rabid. Signs that a bat may be rabid are bats that are active in the daytime, unable to fly, or are found in places where they are not usually seen. If you see one in your home, you need to take precaution. If you wake in the night and find a bat in your room, you may have had an exposure without realizing as a bat's teeth are very small and people can be bitten without feeling it. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that anyone who wakes to find a bat in their home make every effort to safely catch the bat and get it tested for rabies to avoid having to undergo rabies treatment. You should:

- Close all doors and windows to prevent the bat from escaping.
- Wait for the bat to land
- Wearing gloves, slowly approach the bat and place a coffee can or plastic container over it trapping it against the wall or floor.
- Carefully slip a flat piece of cardboard under the can or container trapping the bat inside.
- Tape the cardboard to the can sealing the bat inside.
- CONTACT THE ONEIDA COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT (OCHD) at 315-798-5064 for instructions to have the bat tested for rabies.

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To help protect yourself and your pets, OCHD offers the following tips:

- If you see a bat in your home, do not touch it with your bare hands.
- If you have had an encounter with a bat, seek medical attention immediately.
- Always vaccinate your pets, including horses. Pets may encounter bats outdoors or in the home.
- Bat-proof your home or cabin by plugging all holes in the siding and maintaining tight-fitting screens.

For more information on Rabies Prevention, contact the Oneida County Health Department at 315-798-5064 or log onto our web site at <https://ocgov.net/health>.