



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 20, 2013

Southern Nevada Health District

Health Alert: Rabies and Bats

LAS VEGAS – The Southern Nevada Health District investigated a potential exposure to a rabid bat found in the yard of a Las Vegas home. Because the bat tested positive for rabies, the health district is reminding Clark County residents that bats can be dangerous to people. Although the majority of bats are healthy and good for the environment, a small number are infected with the rabies virus and people should avoid contact with them.

Since 2001, there have been 51 rabid bats reported in Clark County and several human exposures to rabid bats. Because exposures have occurred when pets have discovered bats and brought them into a home, the health district is also stressing the importance of keeping pets up to date on their rabies immunizations.

People can be exposed to the rabies virus by getting bitten by rabid animals or when animals' saliva gets into open wounds or inside the eyes, mouth, or nose (mucous membranes). Fortunately, if people are exposed to the virus, treatment is very effective in preventing rabies infection, but treatment should be started as soon as possible after an exposure.

Bats rarely come into contact with people. However, any bat that is active by day or found in a place where bats are not usually seen, such as in a home or on the ground, might be sick. A bat that is unable to fly, or that is easily approached, could be sick. The following guidelines will help avoid contact with sick and potentially rabid bats:

- Never touch bats.
- Tell children to never touch bats.
- A child should always tell an adult if they find a bat.
- Immunize pets against rabies and make sure their immunizations are up to date.
- Notify Animal Control if you find a bat that:
 - is on the ground,
 - is out during the day,
 - is in your home, or
 - looks sick.

-more-

Health Alert: Rabies and Bats – add one

If a person has had contact with a bat, the health district advises them to call his or her physician immediately as well as the appropriate Animal Control agency (see list below). Animal Control can determine if the bat should be trapped for testing and instruct the caller on safely trapping the bat, if appropriate. A person who might have been exposed to rabies, or their physician, can call the Southern Nevada Health District at (702) 759-1300, option #3, for help with assessing the rabies exposure.

- Clark County Animal Control: (702) 455-7710, press #1
- City of Las Vegas Animal Control: (702) 229-6444, press #2
- City of North Las Vegas Animal Control: (702) 633-1750
- City of Henderson Animal Control: (702) 267-4970, press #4
- Boulder City Animal Control: (702) 293-9283
- City of Mesquite Animal Control: (702) 346 – 5268

Updated information about the Southern Nevada Health District can be found on Facebook www.facebook.com/SouthernNevadaHealthDistrict, on YouTube www.youtube.com/SNHealthDistrict or Twitter: www.twitter.com/SNHDinfo. The health district is now available in Spanish on Twitter www.twitter.com/TuSNHD. Don't have a Twitter account? Follow the health district on your phone by texting "follow SNHDinfo" to 40404.