

RABIES

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT TESTING

If you have been potentially exposed to rabies, the Kent County Health Department (KCHD) will help you decide if you need the rabies post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) vaccine. While it is medically urgent to determine if you need rabies PEP, it is NOT an emergency, as exposure to bats usually doesn't require rabies PEP! Rabies PEP is only necessary if the bat/animal tests positive, or if they cannot be tested.

Testing animals for rabies is fast and can be done before the rabies virus would cause illness in a person, which means that potentially exposed persons can usually wait for the animal test results before starting PEP. If you want to have your bat or other animal tested, please follow these steps:

1



CALL KENT COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Call **616-632-7228** to speak to a staff member in the Communicable Disease (CD) Unit and complete a risk assessment to determine whether the bat or other animal should be tested. The bat or other animal will be tested if the staff member determines there is human risk of rabies.

2



GET THE ANIMAL TESTED

If a bat or any other animal arrives at the animal shelter in the early afternoon, it is typically sent for testing that same afternoon. Test results are expected to be available by the end of the next business day. However, if the bat or animal arrives after that time or on a Friday, it may take an additional business day to receive the results.

3



WAIT FOR ANIMAL TESTING RESULTS

You will receive a call with the test results from a CD unit staff member who can also answer any questions you may still have. If the bat or other animal is positive or is deemed untestable, the staff will provide instructions on how to begin the rabies vaccine series.