



## MEDIA RELEASE

**Information**       **Advisory**       **Warning**       **Update**

**DATE: MARCH 19, 2024**

**TIME: 3:30pm**

### **FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:**

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### **First Rabies Positive Bat of the Season Detected in St. Clair County**

The St. Clair County Health Department (SCCHD) was notified by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) that a bat found in St. Clair County has tested positive for rabies. This is the second rabies positive bat found in Michigan in 2024. On average about 40 bats test positive across the state each year. Less than 2% of bats tested are positive. It's important to know the [facts](#) about rabies.

Rabies is a fatal yet preventable viral disease. It can spread to people and pets if they are bitten or scratched by a sick animal. In the United States, rabies is mostly found in wild animals like bats, raccoons, skunks, and foxes. In Michigan, bats are the most common carriers of rabies.

People and domestic animals should avoid contact with bats. Rabies can spread to people from bats after minor or unrecognized bites or scratches. Any direct contact with a bat should be considered as a possible exposure to rabies.

Bailee Danneels, Communicable Disease Nurse Coordinator at the St. Clair County Health Department explained, *"If someone has been bitten by, exposed to or comes in contact with a bat or other animal, call the Health Department at (810) 987-5300 (option 7) as soon as possible. State law requires all animal bites be reported to your local Health Department and Animal Control office."*

Danneels continued, *"If someone may have been exposed to a bat, do not let the bat go. Safely capture the bat for rabies testing and immediately contact St. Clair County Animal Control.* Information on how to collect a bat safely can be found [here](#).

St. Clair County Health Department and St. Clair County Animal Control encourage residents to protect their pet(s) by ensuring their rabies vaccination are up-to-date. Talk to a Veterinarian about the rabies vaccine

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schedule. Be aware that in spring time, it is not uncommon to see wildlife during the day and evening as they care for their young. If a pet may have been bitten or scratched by a wild animal contact a Veterinarian for instructions on next steps.

For further information about rabies exposure contact the SCCHD Communicable Disease Program at (810) 987-5300 (option 7). To learn more about the St. Clair County Animal Control office and their role in testing bats, call (810) 984-3155.

To learn more about the St. Clair County Health Department visit [www.scchealth.co](http://www.scchealth.co) or follow us on social media @scchdmi.

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