



Paul A. Pettit, MSL, CPH
Public Health Director

**GENESEE COUNTY
HEALTH DEPARTMENT**
3837 West Main Street Rd.
Batavia, NY 14020
(585) 344-2580 x5555

**ORLEANS COUNTY
HEALTH DEPARTMENT**
14016 State Route 31, Suite 101
Albion, NY 14411
(585) 589-3278

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Kaitlin Pettine, MPH, MCHES®
Director of Health Promotion/Public Information Officer
Kaitlin.Pettine@co.genesee.ny.us
Paul Pettit, MSL
Public Health Director

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Bat and Rabies Awareness

It is early August and the height of summer, which often means the peak of “bat season” for local health departments and when people more commonly have encounters with bats.

Bats can occasionally find their way into houses, particularly in older homes that are not properly sealed. This most often occurs during the summer nights. When you find a bat in your home, it is extremely important to **safely** capture the animal if it is suspected to have been in contact with people, pets or livestock so that it can be tested for rabies. If the bat cannot be captured, you should call the health department for advice and next steps.

In some situations, it is possible that a bat bite could go undetected. For example, if you awaken and find a bat in your room, if you see a bat in the room of an unattended child, or if you see a bat near someone who is unable to speak or is under the influence of drugs/alcohol, it is important to seek medical advice and have the bat tested.

To safely capture a bat:

- Turn on room lights and close all the windows.
- Close the room and closet doors.
- Wait for the bat to land.
- While wearing thick leather-like gloves, place a coffee can, pail or similar container over the bat (Never handle a bat with your bare hands).
- Slide a piece of cardboard under the container to trap the bat.
- Firmly hold the cardboard in place against the top of the container, turn it right side up and tape the cardboard tightly to the container.

- If you do not feel comfortable capturing the bat or cannot do it safely, contact your respective health department during regular business hours. If it is after regular business hours, contact your local county dispatch.
 - For Genesee County, call (585) 343-5000
 - For Orleans County, call (585) 589-5527

“Love your own, leave the rest alone”, stated Paul Pettit, Public Health Director for Genesee and Orleans County Health Departments (GO Health). “It is important that residents **DO NOT** pick up, touch, or feed wildlife (raccoons, foxes, skunks, bats, etc.). This is also true for stray cats and dogs. Wild or feral animals, including their babies, can be rabid.”

By avoiding contact with stray or wild animals, or by safely capturing the bat or other animal that may have had contact with us or our pets, and reporting the incident to your local Health Department, we may be able to avoid unnecessary medical treatment that averages over \$3,000.00 per person.

Keep rabies vaccinations current for all dogs, cats, and ferrets. This is important not only to keep your pets from getting rabies, but also to provide a barrier of protection for you and your family if your pet is bitten by a rabid animal.

Please take note of our upcoming drive-thru rabies vaccination clinics for dogs, cats and ferrets in Genesee and Orleans Counties, offered at no charge.

Genesee County: Genesee County Fairgrounds (5056 E. Main St., Batavia, NY)

- August 10, 2023 from 4:00-6:30PM
- October 12, 2023 from 4:00-6:00PM

Orleans County: Orleans County Fairgrounds (12690 RT. 31, Albion, NY)

- August 26, 2023 from 9:00-11:30AM
- October 21, 2023 from 9:00-11:30AM

For more information on GO Health’s programs and services, visit GOHealthNY.org. You can also contact your respective health department:

- Genesee County- 585-344-2580 x5555 or Health@co.genesee.ny.us
- Orleans County- 585-589-3278 or OCPublicHealth@orleanscountyny.gov

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