

Chicago Department of Public Health

Evaluating Potential Human Exposures to Rabies: **Bats & Wild Animals**

What is a rabies exposure?

Rabies is transmitted through exposure to virus in saliva or brain/nervous system tissue. Rabies exposures can be either:

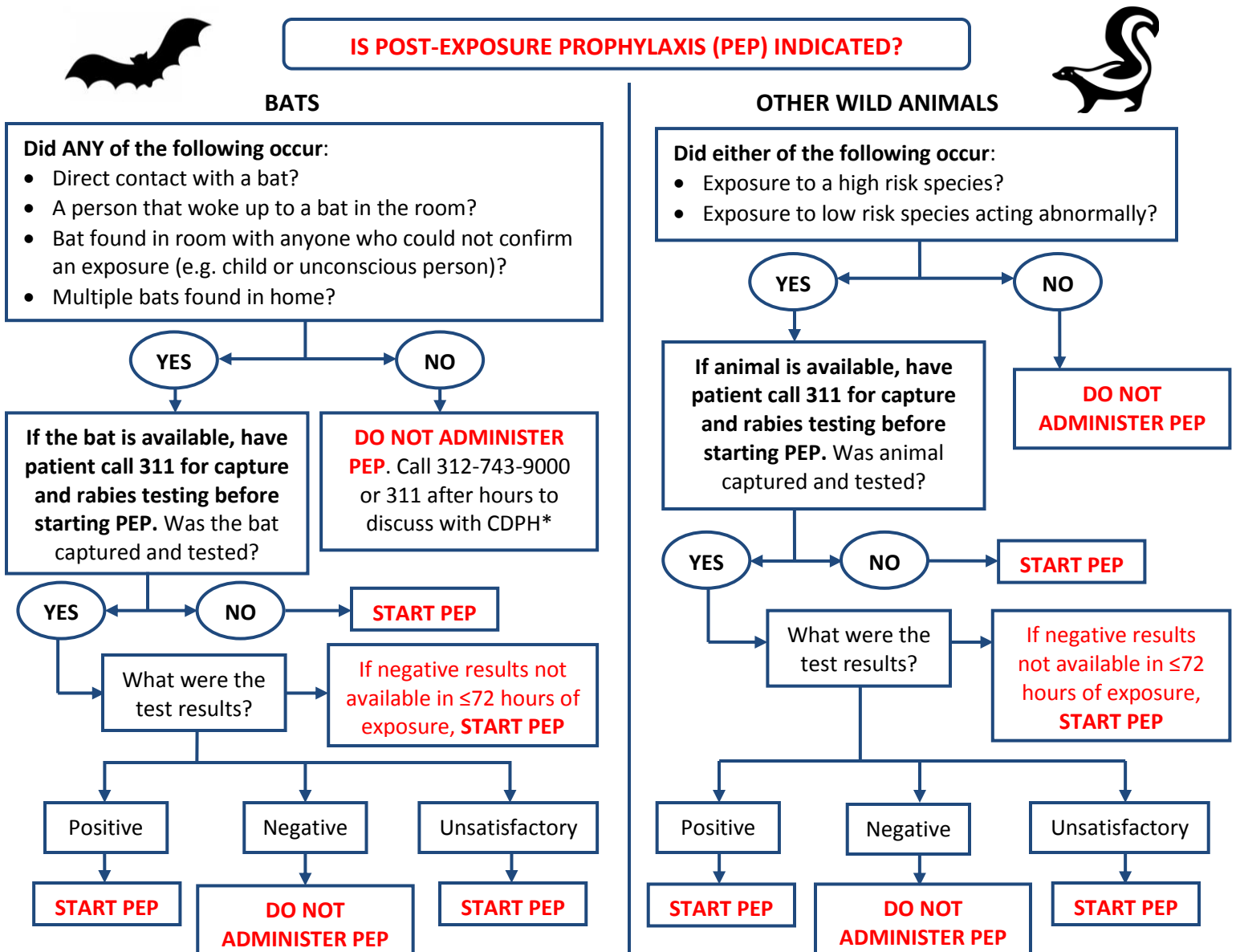
- Bite: Any penetration of the skin, regardless of body site, by the teeth of a potentially rabid animal.
- Non-bite: The contamination of open wounds, abrasions, or mucous membranes (eyes, nose, mouth) with potentially infectious saliva or nervous tissue.

Exposures reportable to CDPH within 24 hours: to report, call 312-743-9000 or 311 if after hours*:

1. Any person with exposure to a bat or in the same room as a bat but unaware that direct contact has occurred.
2. Any person bitten by a non-human primate or wild mammal, not including small rodents or rabbits.
3. Any person started on post-exposure prophylaxis.
4. If unsure about PEP, call 312-743-9000, or 311 if after hours, to speak with a Communicable Disease clinician.

Important questions to ask:

1. How did the exposure occur?
2. When and where (address, city, state, country) did the exposure occur?
3. What was the animal species? Was it a high risk (bat, skunk, raccoon, fox, groundhog, non-human primate) or low risk (squirrel, mouse, rat, gerbil, hamster, guinea pig, rabbit, opossum) species?
4. If a low-risk species, was the animal acting unusual?
5. Is the animal available for testing? If so, the patient should call 311 so that the animal may be captured & tested.



*To discuss or report rabies exposures, call 312-743-9000 during business hours or 311 after hours and ask for the Communicable Disease clinician on-call.