

# Public Health Madison and Dane County: Rabies-infected bat found outside park bathroom

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A bat found near the restrooms along Lakeland Avenue in Olbrich Park on Wednesday, June 2 has tested positive for rabies. A Park Ranger was dispatched to the park after getting a report of a bat in the area. The bat was submitted to the WI State Lab of Hygiene for rabies testing.

“This is a great example of the importance of reporting, it’s truly a matter of life and death,” said Environmental Health Supervisor John Hausbeck. “The quicker we know about the presence of a bat, the quicker we can get the animal tested and prevent exposure as much as possible, especially in such a heavily-traveled area.”

[Rabies](#) is a deadly virus spread to people from the saliva of infected animals. After a [bite](#) by a rabid animal, the infection moves from the bite wound to the nerve cells, causing a variety of symptoms including fever, vomiting, muscle weakness, drooling and convulsions.

“Bats have very small teeth, which leave small marks that go away quickly. This makes it hard to know for sure whether it bit you at all,” said Hausbeck. “If someone waits until they start seeing signs and [symptoms](#) of rabies, they have likely waited too long. It’s always best to consult your healthcare provider if you suspect you’ve had any [contact](#) with a bat.”

To date this year, four bats have tested positive for rabies in Wisconsin, this is the second in Dane County. Last year, a total of seven bats tested positive in Dane County.

“Even though these numbers suggest that the risks of exposure may be low it is important to take bat bite exposure seriously,” said Hausbeck. “Because the consequences are catastrophic, it is best to not take any chances and get vaccinated if you suspect a bat bite and the bat is unavailable for testing.”

If you come across a bat in your living space or in a populated area where contact with people or pets is likely, call the Police and Fire Dispatch at (608) 255-2345 right away and ask an Animal Services Officer to pick up the bat and have it tested for rabies.