

Animal Bite



September 2021 • Information for Pierce County Medical Providers

Disease Prevention & Management
3629 South D Street, Tacoma, WA 98418
(253) 649-1412 (phone) • (253) 649-1389 (fax)

The Washington State notifiable conditions rules were revised, including animal bite reporting, which requires that only **suspected rabies exposures be immediately** reported to local health jurisdictions (LHJ).

Bites where there is essentially no risk of rabies do **NOT** need to be reported, such as:

- Rodents, opossums, rabbits, squirrels, and domestic livestock (e.g., cattle, horse, sheep) unless there were unusual circumstances
- Normally-acting dogs, cats, or ferrets if:
 - Animal was vaccinated,
 - Bite was provoked, **AND**
 - There was no known contact with bats or other wild carnivores (e.g., raccoons, coyotes, foxes, skunks). This is especially true when the animal is the victim's pet and can be observed at home.

There are settings when you should **ALWAYS** report the bite. These include bites from:

- Any rabid-acting mammal
- Bats, wild carnivores (e.g., raccoons, skunks, foxes, coyotes), and hybrid carnivores (e.g., wolf-dog, coyote-dog, many domestic cat-wild cat hybrids)
- Dogs, cats, or ferrets if:
 - Bite occurred in a rabies-endemic country (e.g., Asia, Africa, South America), or
 - Animal was imported from rabies-endemic country in the past 6 months, or
 - Animal had known exposure to a bat or other wild carnivore.

These and new requirements for other notifiable conditions are posted at:
www.doh.wa.gov/ForPublicHealthandHealthcareProviders/NotifiableConditions.

Clinical Signs of Rabies in Animals
www.cdc.gov/rabies/specific_groups/veterinarians/clinical_signs.html

Additional information from Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department at www.tpchd.org/resources/animal-bites or (253) 649-1412 if you have any questions.