

ANIMAL BITES

Wound Care Guide

What is it?

Animal bites aren't just painful; they're dangerous. Every bite carries the risk of infection, and worse, rabies, a deadly virus that attacks the brain and nervous system.

Rabies spreads through infected saliva or tissue, and it only takes one bite, one scratch, or one splash into your eyes, mouth, or an open wound to put you at risk. The usual suspects? Bats, foxes, skunks, coyotes and raccoons. If you've been bitten or scratched, even if it seems minor, get medical help immediately. Once rabies symptoms start, it's almost always fatal. There's no cure once you're infected.



First Aid: What to do right away

Time is everything. Here's how to treat the wound before you get to a doctor:

- Flush the wound with clean running water and soap for 15 minutes.
- Don't scrub. Don't soak. Just rinse hard and fast.
- Skip the alcohol and peroxide. They'll dry out the wound and slow healing.



Who to contact

Seek medical attention immediately

After you've cleaned the bite, contact your doctor or seek medical attention right away. You may need wound care and antibiotics.

Contact Public Health

Call WDG Public Health if the animal might have rabies. Public Health will help determine the risk of exposure to rabies and discuss if rabies post exposure treatment is necessary and arrange your rabies vaccines (PEP). 8:30am-4:30pm: 1-800-265-7293 x4793. After 4:30pm: 1-877-884-8653

Talk to a nurse

Call: 1-800-265-7293 ext. 7006 Mon-Fri, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Email: clientcommunitysupport@wdgpublichealth.ca

wdgpublichealth.ca



Public Health
WELLINGTON-DUFFERIN-GUELPH
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