



COUNTY OF ORANGE – HEALTH CARE AGENCY

PRESS RELEASE

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Bat Found at Laguna Niguel Regional Park Tests Positive for Rabies

(Santa Ana) - A bat found on the ground at shelter #7 in Laguna Niguel Regional Park on September 7, 2013 has tested positive for rabies. Anyone who had recent contact with a bat in the vicinity of Laguna Niguel Regional Park is asked to call Orange County Health Care Agency Epidemiology at (714) 834-8180 from 8am to 5pm or (714) 834-7792 after hours so a nurse can evaluate the risk for rabies.

Once a person begins showing signs and symptoms of rabies, the disease is nearly always fatal. For that reason preventive treatment to stop the rabies virus from causing illness is given to anyone who may have been exposed to rabies. Medical assistance should be obtained promptly after an exposure so any wound can be cleaned and preventive treatment can be started. This treatment is safe and effective.

The rabies virus is found in an animal's saliva and is transmitted to people by a bite from a rabid animal. Although very rare, contamination of the eyes, mouth or an open wound by the saliva of a rabid animal can also transmit rabies. Most cases of human rabies in the United States in recent years have resulted from bat strains of rabies; bats have very small teeth, and their bites may go unnoticed.

The Health Care Agency and OC Animal Care recommend the following preventive actions:

- Avoid all contact with wild animals
- Vaccinate all cats and dogs against rabies
- Do not sleep with open unscreened windows or doors

- If bats are seen inside the house or other structure, close off the area and contact animal control.
Once the bat(s) have been removed, close off any areas allowing entrance into the house.
- Do not leave pet food outside where it will attract wild animals.
- Immediately wash all animal bites with soap and water, being sure to flush the wound well, then contact your doctor
- Report all animal bites to OC Animal Care
- Report stray animals to OC Animal Care

Potential exposure to a bat or other wild animal should be reported to Orange County Health Care Agency Epidemiology at (714) 834-8180. To report a bat in your home, an animal bite, or a stray animal, contact OC Animal Care at (714) 935-6848.

More information about rabies is available at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at www.cdc.gov/rabies

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