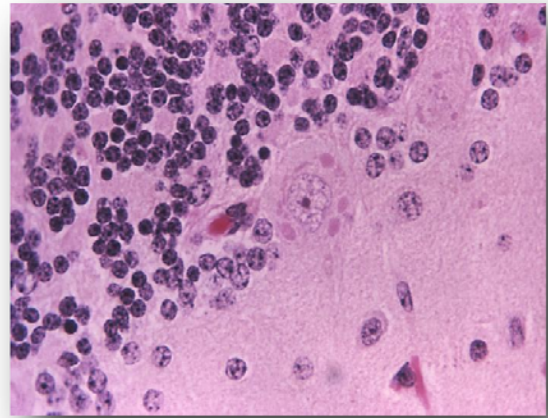


**Rabies** is a viral disease that affects the nervous system of humans and other mammals and is almost always fatal. Rabies in humans is rare in the United States. The vast majority of rabies cases reported each year occur in wild animals including raccoons, skunks, bats and foxes. People usually get rabies from the bite of a rabid animal. It is also possible, but quite rare, for people to get rabies if infectious material from a rabid animal, such as saliva, gets directly into their eyes, nose, mouth or a wound. Because rabies has also occurred in people who have very close contact with bats without an apparent bite, this type of contact is also considered a risk and should be followed up by a medical practitioner.



Rabies virus infects the central nervous system and causes inflammation of the brain. Early symptoms are non-specific and include fever, headache and a generalized feeling of discomfort. As the disease progresses, symptoms may include difficulty sleeping, anxiety, confusion, hallucinations, excessive drooling, difficulty swallowing and fear of water. Death usually occurs within a few days of the onset of symptoms.

Although the majority of rabies cases occur in wild animals, most humans are given rabies vaccine as a result of exposure to domestic animals. When rabies occurs in domestic animals, the risk to humans is increased. Therefore, these animals should be vaccinated to prevent them from acquiring the disease and transmitting it to humans.

*-Above text is from the Maine Center for Disease Control's Rabies annual report for 2007.*

***The links below provide information that will help you learn more about rabies and the rabies vaccination:***

-Maine Center for Disease Control, Division of Infectious Disease, Rabies Surveillance Website:  
[http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/boh/ddc/rabies\\_surveillance.htm](http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/boh/ddc/rabies_surveillance.htm)

-United States Centers For Disease Control and Prevention Website:  
<http://www.cdc.gov/rabies/>

-List of Rabies Vaccinations licensed in the United States (as of 2008). This list includes dosage and booster information for each vaccination.  
<http://www.portlandmaine.gov/hhs/rabiesvaccinelist08.pdf>

-Frequently asked questions, both general and vaccination specific, from the Central Maine Veterinary Hospital.  
<http://www.centralmainevethospital.com/faq.asp>

***If you have any questions about Rabies or want to report a potential case of Rabies please call the following phone number 24 hours a day, 7 days a week: 1-800-821-5821***



City of Portland, HHSD, Public Health Division  
389 Congress Street  
Portland, Maine 04101  
Phone: 207-874-8784  
Email: [phweb@portlandmaine.gov](mailto:phweb@portlandmaine.gov)  
Website: <http://publichealth.portlandmaine.gov>