



MID-MICHIGAN DISTRICT HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Your public health team, connecting with our communities to achieve healthier outcomes

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What to do when a bat invades your space

Ithaca, Stanton, St. Johns~ When people discover a bat in their home, they usually do one of two things: they panic and run for cover, or they grab a tennis racket and go after the creature with all they've got, often knocking down the curtains in the process.

What most people don't know is that if the bat needs to be tested for rabies, the head must be kept intact, so hitting it with any type of an object, like a tennis racket, is not advised.

So what should you do? First of all, don't panic. Safely capturing a bat isn't as difficult as you may think. The first step is to make sure not to touch it with your bare skin (leather work gloves are ideal). Have a small box or coffee can, a piece of cardboard and tape ready. When the bat lands, approach it slowly. Place the box or coffee can over the bat and slide the cardboard under the container to trap the bat inside. Tape the cardboard securely to the container. To see a video demonstration of safe bat capture, visit www.mmdhd.org.

Once you have captured the bat, contact the health department at 989-227-3111 in Clinton County, 989-875-1019 in Gratiot County, or 989-831-3615 in Montcalm County for further instructions and to find out if the bat needs to be tested. If a bat has been found in the room of a sleeping person, in the room of an unattended child, or near a mentally impaired or intoxicated person, or if a bite occurs, it may need to be tested for rabies. Again, make sure not to strike the bat's head with any type of object, and please, do not bring a bat to the health department without calling first.

If you are bitten by a bat, seek medical attention right away.

Mid-Michigan District Health Department serves the residents of Clinton, Gratiot and Montcalm Counties.

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