



Clinton County Health Department

133 Margaret Street, Plattsburgh, New York 12901-2926

"Working Together for a Healthier Community"

health.clintoncountyny.gov



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Administration Division

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Media Release

Date: August 7, 2026
For Immediate Release
Contact: 518-565-4840

Catch The Bat

Plattsburgh, August 7, 2026. The Clinton County Health Department (CCHD) is urging residents to not release bats that are discovered in their homes. Bats can carry the fatal rabies virus and once symptoms appear in people or pets, there is no cure. It is important to consult with the CCHD team to determine if anyone in the home was exposed to the animal. Any person or pet that comes into contact with an infected animal is at risk of getting rabies.

"If you find a bat in your home, safely capture it or confine it to one room and immediately call the Clinton County Health Department to determine if the bat needs to be tested," explained Amanda Masten, Senior Public Health Sanitarian in the Environmental Health & Safety Division at CCHD. "So far this year 43 people have received rabies post exposure shots compared to 15 at this time last year. Many of these could have been avoided if there had been a bat available to test".

Follow these precautions to lower your risk of rabies exposure:

- **Catch The Bat:** If you discover a bat in your home, safely capture or contain it in one room and immediately call the health department at 518-565-4870. The Rabies Officers can help determine if the bat needs to be tested. If there is no bat available to test, then you and your family may need to receive post exposure rabies shots.
- **Ensure Pets Are Vaccinated:** Ensure that all pets, including dogs, cats, ferrets, and domesticated livestock, are up-to-date on their rabies vaccinations. Vaccination not only safeguards pets but also acts as a barrier against rabies transmission to humans. CCHD offers free rabies vaccinations for dogs, cats and ferrets. A full schedule of upcoming clinics can be found at www.clintoncountyny.gov/health/news-and-events.
- **Avoid Strange-Acting Wildlife:** Exercise caution around wildlife, particularly if they exhibit abnormal or aggressive behavior. Do not approach or attempt to handle wild animals, even if they are injured. Teach children to do the same. Instead, contact a Certified Wildlife Rehabilitator. To find one near you visit: <https://appfactory.dec.ny.gov/SpecialLicensesSearchSystem/rehab>
- **Report Suspected Cases:** If you encounter a wild animal displaying unusual behavior such as aggression, disorientation, or excessive drooling, promptly notify local animal control or the health department.
- **Prepare Your Home:** Keep your property free of stored bird seed or other foods that may attract wild animals. Tightly cap or put away garbage cans. Board up any openings to your attic, basement, porch, or garage. If your home has a chimney, make sure it is capped with a screen. If a wild animal is living in a garage, shed, or other part of your home, contact a wild animal control expert to have them removed.



"Persons who have any physical mobility or other needs, call the telephone number above to arrange for accommodations"

Additional information on rabies can be found in CCHD's *North Country Health Effect* available at <https://www.clintoncountyny.gov/sites/default/files/health/public-promotion/pdf/north-county-health-effect/rabies.pdf>

About the Clinton County Health Department:

The Health Department is an accredited full service department serving the residents of Clinton County. The Health Department's Mission is to improve and protect the health, well-being and environment of the people of Clinton County. Visit our website at www.clintoncountyny.gov/health or connect with us on Facebook (@clintonhealth), X (Twitter [@ClintonCountyHD]), and Instagram (clintoncountyhealth).

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