



News Release – For immediate release,  
04/24/2026

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### **Tuscarawas County Health Department Reports Bat Tests Positive for Rabies**

DOVER – On the afternoon of April 24, 2026, the Tuscarawas County Health Department (TCHD) was notified by the Ohio Department of Health that a bat found in Dennison tested positive for rabies. This marks the first confirmed rabies case in Tuscarawas County since before 2021. A total of four additional bats have tested positive for rabies in Ohio in 2026, with cases reported in Clinton, Hamilton, Warren, and Wood Counties.

There are no confirmed exposures to humans or other animals; however, out of an abundance of caution, local health officials are monitoring the pet that alerted the Dennison resident to the bat's presence.

Rabies is a deadly virus that attacks the central nervous system, including the brain and spinal cord. Although rabies is found most often in wild animals like bats, skunks, and raccoons; it can infect any mammal, including pets and humans. The virus is spread through the saliva of an infected animal, typically via a bite or contact with an open wound or mucous membranes, such as the eyes, nose, or mouth.

“While this is a serious situation, there is no need for alarm,” explained Katie Seward, MPH, MBA, Tuscarawas County Health Commissioner. “We want to remind residents to avoid contact with wild animals and to seek medical attention right away if they believe they have been exposed. Prompt treatment is highly effective in preventing rabies.”

Bats are the most common source of rabies exposure in Ohio. Because bat bites can be small and difficult to detect, residents should exercise caution if a bat is found indoors, especially in situations involving sleeping individuals, children, or pets.

TCHD encourages residents to follow these safety precautions:

- Avoid contact with wild or stray animals.
- Never approach animals that appear sick, injured, or dead.
- Report unusual animal behavior to local authorities.

As a reminder, pursuant to Ohio law, the Tuscarawas County Health Department requires all dogs and cats over the age of 3 months to be vaccinated against rabies.

For more information about rabies, visit <https://www.tchdnow.org/animal-bite-investigation.html> .

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