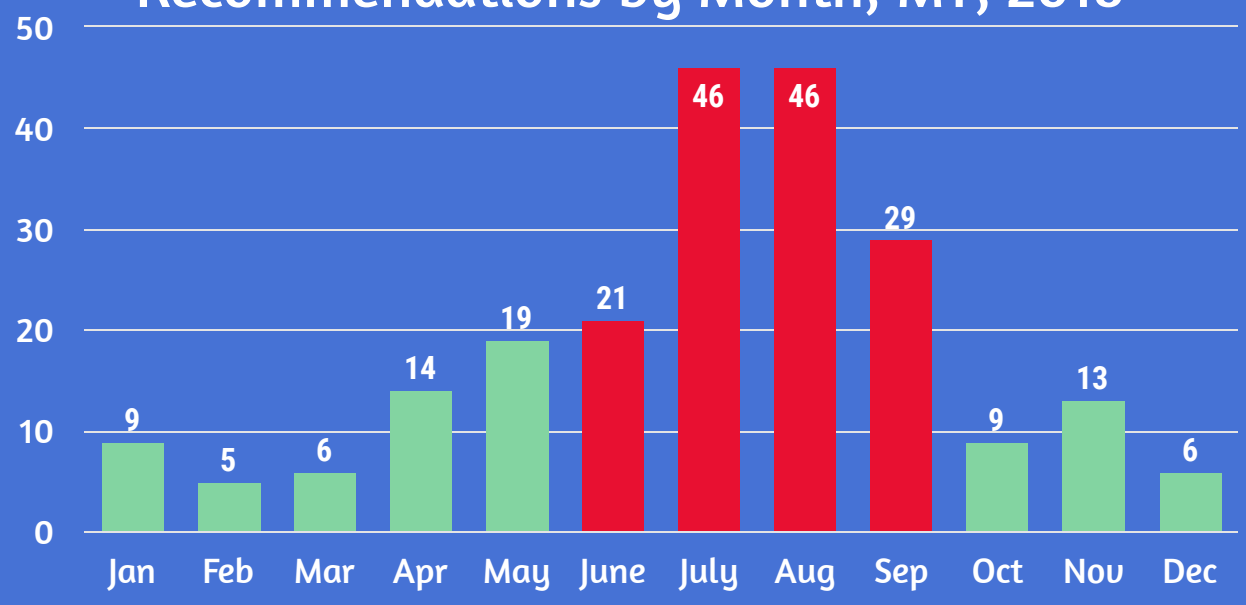
Rabies Exposures in Montana

Rabies is typically transmitted through the bite of an infected animal. Any animal bite, and any exposure to bats either through direct contact or sleeping with a bat in the room, should be assessed by local public health.

Number of Rabies Preventative Treatment Recommendations by Month, MT, 2018



Summer Exposures

Animal bites from domestic and wild animals tend to increase in the summer due to and increase in outdoor activities.

Exposures to some animals are riskier for rabies than others. Bats and skunks are high risk animals.

What do I do if I think I have been exposed to rabies?

1. **Wash the wound/bite with soap and water**

   Washing wounds with plain soap and water can help prevent infection of common bacteria, and will also play a role in preventing rabies infection.

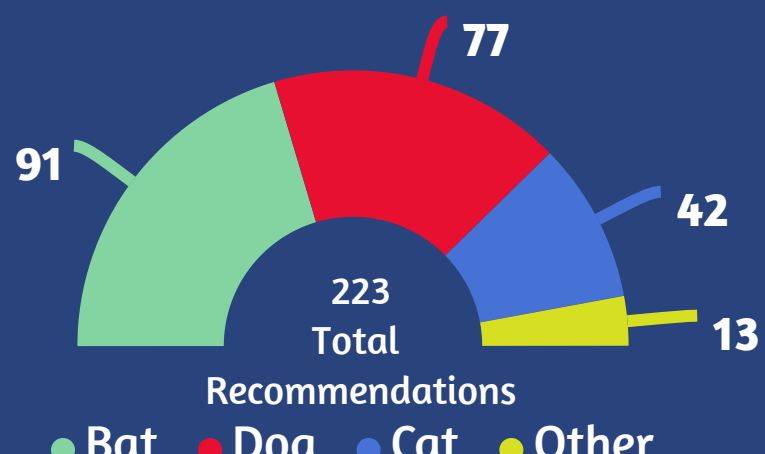
2. **Visit a health care provider**

   A healthcare provider can assess a wound in the case of an animal bite, and also can provide guidance when preventative treatment for rabies is necessary.

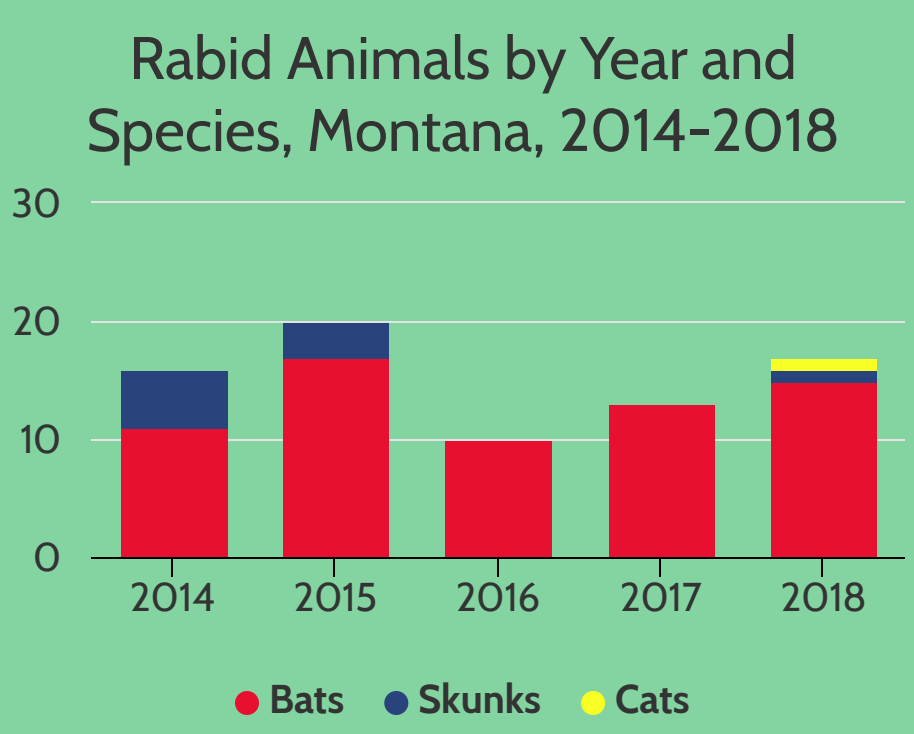
3. **Notify your local health department**

   The local health department works with you and your healthcare provider to determine if rabies preventative treatment is necessary.

Of the 223 recommendations from public health to receive preventative treatment in 2018, 41% of those exposures involved bats. Bites from dogs and cats were 53% of exposures.



How Common Is Rabies in Animals?



Bats and skunks are the most commonly identified rabid animals. Livestock, such as cattle and horses, have tested positive for rabies (2012), and rabid dogs were found in 2012 and 2013. It is important to note that animals that are rabid may not appear to be sick when they bite, scratch, or otherwise expose a human or domestic animal.

Local public health along with their veterinary partners will assess the animal, and will determine if further testing is necessary after an exposure.

Public Health IN THE 406
MONTANA COMMUNICABLE DISEASE EPIDEMIOLOGY