



# GEORGIA POISON CENTER

## WHO TO CALL FIRST Rabies Exposure

The Georgia Poison Center (GPC) is the official statewide resource for the delivery of protocol-driven treatment and prevention advice for animal bites and rabies exposures. Our staff provides 24-hour advice regarding the assessment of animal bites. Here are a few tips to keep you and your family safe:

### **What is rabies?**

Rabies is a deadly disease caused by a virus. The rabies virus is found in the saliva and brain tissue of infected animals.

### **How is rabies spread?**

Rabies can be spread from animal to animal or animal to human when the saliva or brain tissue of an infected animal gets in the mouth, eyes or an open cut. It is most often spread to animals and humans through a bite.

### **What animals can get rabies?**

Rabies is carried mainly by wild animals like raccoons, skunks, foxes and bats. Humans, dogs and cats can also get rabies. Squirrels, hamsters, guinea pigs, gerbils, chipmunks, rats, mice and rabbits usually do not get rabies.

### **What are the signs and symptoms of rabies?**

Early symptoms of rabies in humans may include fever, headache and general discomfort. Insomnia, anxiety, confusion, paralysis, hallucinations, agitation, difficulty swallowing may appear later. Death usually occurs within days of the onset of symptoms.

### **How can I protect myself, my family and pet(s) from rabies:**

- Make sure your pets get their rabies shots regularly
- Do not leave your pets unattended outdoors
- Do not leave garbage or pet food outside. Food left out may attract wild or stray animals
- Stay away from wild, sick, hurt or dead animals
- Do not keep wild animals as pets
- Do not go near, tease or play with wild animals or unknown dogs and cats

**For more information, call the Georgia Poison Center 1-800-222-1222**

**Please visit us at [www.georgiapoisoncenter.org](http://www.georgiapoisoncenter.org),  
like us on [Facebook](#), and follow us on [Twitter](#) (@PoisonCenterGA).**