

THE RABIES VIRUS

- **Animals in the U.S. that carry the rabies virus include; raccoons, skunks, dogs, cats, bats, foxes, coyotes, and livestock**
- **Worldwide more than 30,000 humans die each year from rabies, 99% of which were contracted from dogs. Dogs and cats should always be vaccinated for rabies**
- **Never attempt to handle a wild animal including feral dogs or cats, particularly if it appears sick or injured**
- **Rabies is a fatal disease once symptoms begin to show and precautions should be taken immediately**

RABIES AND BATS

- **Less than 0.5% of bats carry rabies, but in the U.S. approximately 1 person dies per year of rabies contracted from a bat**
- **Although the possibility of contracting rabies from bats is very small, your chances of contracting rabies from bats is further diminished if you never handle a bat**
- **Rabies can be contracted from a bat from a bite or saliva exposed to an open wound**
- **Transmission of the rabies virus from bats to dogs has never been documented however there are some rare cases of transmission of rabies from bats to cats**

IF YOU COME INTO PHYSICAL CONTACT WITH A BAT

- **If you have come into physical contact with a bat, call the Mississippi Health Department immediately at: 601-576-7588**
- **Any bat that bites a human should be tested for rabies at the MS Health Department**
- **If the bat tests negative, there is nothing to worry about. If the bat tests positive, the person needs to go through post-exposure shots which are relatively painless**
- **There are no cases of fatalities for people that have undergone post-exposure rabies shots**