



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

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YOUTHS NOT EXPOSED TO RABIES FROM BAT

County Health Officials Interview Boys to Ensure Safety

The Health and Human Services Agency (HHS) has determined the three boys who found a live bat, which later died and tested positive for rabies, were not exposed to the disease.

“We have interviewed the boys extensively and confirmed they did not touch the bat,” said Eric McDonald, M.D., M.P.H., Deputy County Public Health Officer. “We conducted the search for the boys to ensure their health and safety.”

The three boys, ranging between 12 and 15 years of age, brought the rabid bat to a Vista PETCO on July 10. They were identified on Monday, July 18 by another youth who had seen them with the bat prior to bringing it to the store. The witness called County officials after hearing about the case in the media.

On Tuesday, July 19 County Public Health nurses interviewed the boys at length to verify that they did not touch the bat and are not at risk, according to public health guidelines, for rabies. Their own physicians will make final recommendations about whether the boys will receive any preventive treatments.

County officials worked with the San Diego County Sheriff’s Department, PETCO staff and the media to find the three boys.

While bats and other wild animals might be interesting to look at, touching them—even when they’re dead—could expose individuals to rabies, a disease that can be deadly.

Rabies transmission may occur if a bat bites someone, or if a bat’s saliva comes in contact with a person’s eyes, nose, mouth or open wound. Symptoms of rabies in people can take weeks or months to develop after exposure to a rabid animal has occurred.

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