

Mayo Clinic Minute

What you should know about bats and rabies

Video	Audio
	The most dangerous threat of rabies in the U.S. is flying overhead.
Dr. Poland	"It used to be thought, well, it's a rabid dog. But the more common way of getting rabies is from the silver-haired bat."
	Mayo Clinic's Dr. Gregory Poland says the deadly virus is transmitted from the saliva of infected animals to humans, usually through a bite.
Gregory Poland, M.D. Vaccine Research Group Mayo Clinic	"... The bat doesn't always bite. Sometimes the saliva will drool onto you, and you could have a minor open cut. Or sometimes a bat will lick on the skin and, again, transmit the virus that way."
	Dr. Poland says that's why if you wake up and find a bat in the room, you should get the rabies vaccine.
Dr. Poland	"People think, 'Well, the bat's in the house. We woke up with it, doesn't look like it bit anybody.' Doesn't matter. Rabies is such a severe disease with no cure, no treatment for it, that the safer thing to do is give the rabies vaccine."
	That includes an immune globulin and multidose rabies series which is not cheap. A typical series of rabies vaccines cost anywhere from three to seven thousand dollars. For the Mayo Clinic News Network, I'm Jason Howland.