

# Rabies Educational Packet



For more information, call  
Westchester County Department of Health at (914) 813-5000 (24 hours a day)  
or visit our website at [www.westchestergov.com/health](http://www.westchestergov.com/health)

# What You need to know about Rabies!

Rabies is a deadly virus that lives in the saliva and brain tissue of infected animals.

Rabies is spread mainly through bites from infected animals. But, the virus can also be spread by scratches and contact with an infected animal's saliva.

Rabies is carried mainly by wild animals, such as: raccoons, skunks, bats and foxes. However, stray dogs and cats may also carry rabies.

Never touch wild or stray animals, always stay a safe distance from wildlife and pets you don't know.

Keep your pets safe, too. Have your dog, cat or ferret vaccinated (given a shot) against rabies by your veterinarian (animal doctor).

Even if your dog, cat or ferret always stays inside the house, he/she still needs to get vaccinated against rabies. **IT'S THE LAW.**

Always walk your dog on a leash and keep your cats and ferrets inside. This will lower their chances of getting rabies from wild or stray animals.

Know the signs of rabies. An animal can look healthy even though it is infected with the rabies virus. However, if an animal acts strangely, such as: confused, running in circles, sluggish, foaming at the mouth or hyper, it may be rabid.

Always tell an adult about any contact you may have had with a wild or stray animal. Even baby animals can be sick with rabies, so never play with them.

If you find a bat on the ground or wake up to a bat tell an adult immediately. Do not touch it.

If you are bitten or scratched by any animal, tell an adult and report it to the Westchester County Department of Health. Wash the wound with warm, soapy water.

# Glossary

*These are words that will help you learn about rabies:*

**Fatal:** deadly

**Infected:** when a person or animal carries a sickness inside its body

**Rabid:** an animal that carries rabies is called a rabid animal

**Stray:** a pet that nobody owns, that lives outdoors and wanders around the neighborhood

**Vaccinated:** when people or pets are given shots to protect them from getting sick

**Veterinarian:** an animal doctor

**Virus:** a tiny germ that makes you or your pet sick

**Wildlife:** animals that are not pets, such as raccoons, skunks, foxes, or bats

# Bat Rabies

(for Parents)

## **Are Rabid Bats a Threat to Human Health?**

Since 1980, more people in the United States have been infected with a bat rabies strain than any other strain. Bats infected with rabies may have the virus in their saliva and may transmit the disease to humans and other animals.

## **Are all Bats Rabid?**

Most bats are healthy and contribute to our environment in many ways. However, rabies has been confirmed in all nine indigenous species of New York bats. The vast majority of confirmed rabies cases occur in the big brown bats.

## **How can Someone Tell if a Bat has Rabies?**

Rabid bats may show abnormal behavior, such as outdoor activity during daylight; rabid bats may be grounded or paralyzed, or they bite a person or animal. Not all rabid bats act abnormally, but bats that do act abnormally are more likely to have rabies.

## **Where do the Most Common Bats Roost?**

The big brown bat and the little brown bat are common house bats that roost during spring and summer in attics, behind shutters, and in other sheltered areas of human dwellings and outbuildings. It is important to bat-proof your home before the bats arrive by blocking any small openings that will allow a bat entrance into your home.

## **What if a Person is Bitten by a Bat?**

A bat bite might be difficult or impossible to recognize. Rabies treatment should be considered for any physical contact with a bat, when a bite, scratch or contamination of any open wound or mucous membrane (eye, nose, mouth) cannot be ruled out. Sleeping in a room where bats were found, or gained entry, should also be considered an exposure that warrants reporting and, possibly, treatment. Wash any bite, scratch or other exposure site with warm soapy water. Then call your doctor or the Westchester County Health Department immediately if you suspect that you have been exposed to rabies. If possible, capture the bat and arrange for the Health Department to test the bat for rabies. \*Be extremely cautious when attempting to capture the bat, to minimize risk of further exposure.

## **What if a Pet is Bitten by a Bat?**

Whenever a dog, cat or other domestic animal with up-to-date rabies vaccination is bitten or comes into contact with a bat, capture the bat if possible. Immediately arrange with the local health department for the bat to be tested for rabies. If the bat is unavailable for testing, or tests positive for rabies, the pet must be given a rabies booster vaccination within five days. If an unvaccinated pet has contact with a rabid or suspect rabid bat, the pet must be euthanized or strictly confined for six months.

\*Adapted from Bat Rabies in New York State, State of New York Department of Health

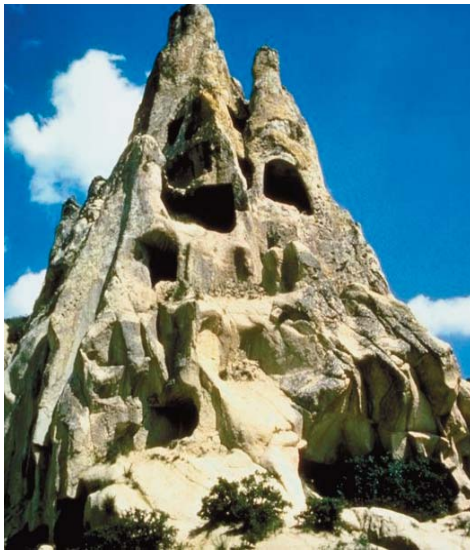
# Circle the places where bats should NOT be allowed to live



House



Barn



Cave



Tree



Building

# Rabies Word Find

A B C A D U L T S R M R Z L  
E R W I L D L I F E Y F O X  
S A E D B M H O C T B O L M  
P I T O Q A E F F A T A L S  
M N P G O U T W Q E T U P T  
B H E L P C D E W S X O L E  
E V A C C I N A T E K T I P  
Y Q Z S S U R I V E U U O M  
T Y D O C T O R F A E I N M  
R A C C O O N T C P L J K K

**Find these words:**

Fox	Bat	Skunk	Raccoon	Cat
Dog	Adult	Brain	Help	Pets
Virus	Doctor	Vaccinate	Fatal	Wildlife

# Stay Safe From Rabies

*Answer the questions below by using the words in the word box on the bottom of page.*

1. \_\_\_\_\_ is a fatal disease transmitted in saliva. The only way to test an animal for rabies is to look at \_\_\_\_\_ tissue.
2. Rabies is a \_\_\_\_\_, not a bacteria.
3. One important way to protect your pet from rabies is to \_\_\_\_\_ all pets against rabies.
4. You should tell an \_\_\_\_\_ if you are bitten or scratched by an animal.
5. Some people wrongly believe that a \_\_\_\_\_ which stays inside all the time need not be vaccinated for rabies.
6. If you are bitten by an animal, you should immediately wash the wound with \_\_\_\_\_ and then contact your doctor or go to the hospital.

## Word Box

soap and water  
pet  
virus  
rabies  
brain  
vaccinate  
adult

Place a circle around the animals that can carry rabies.





# True or False?

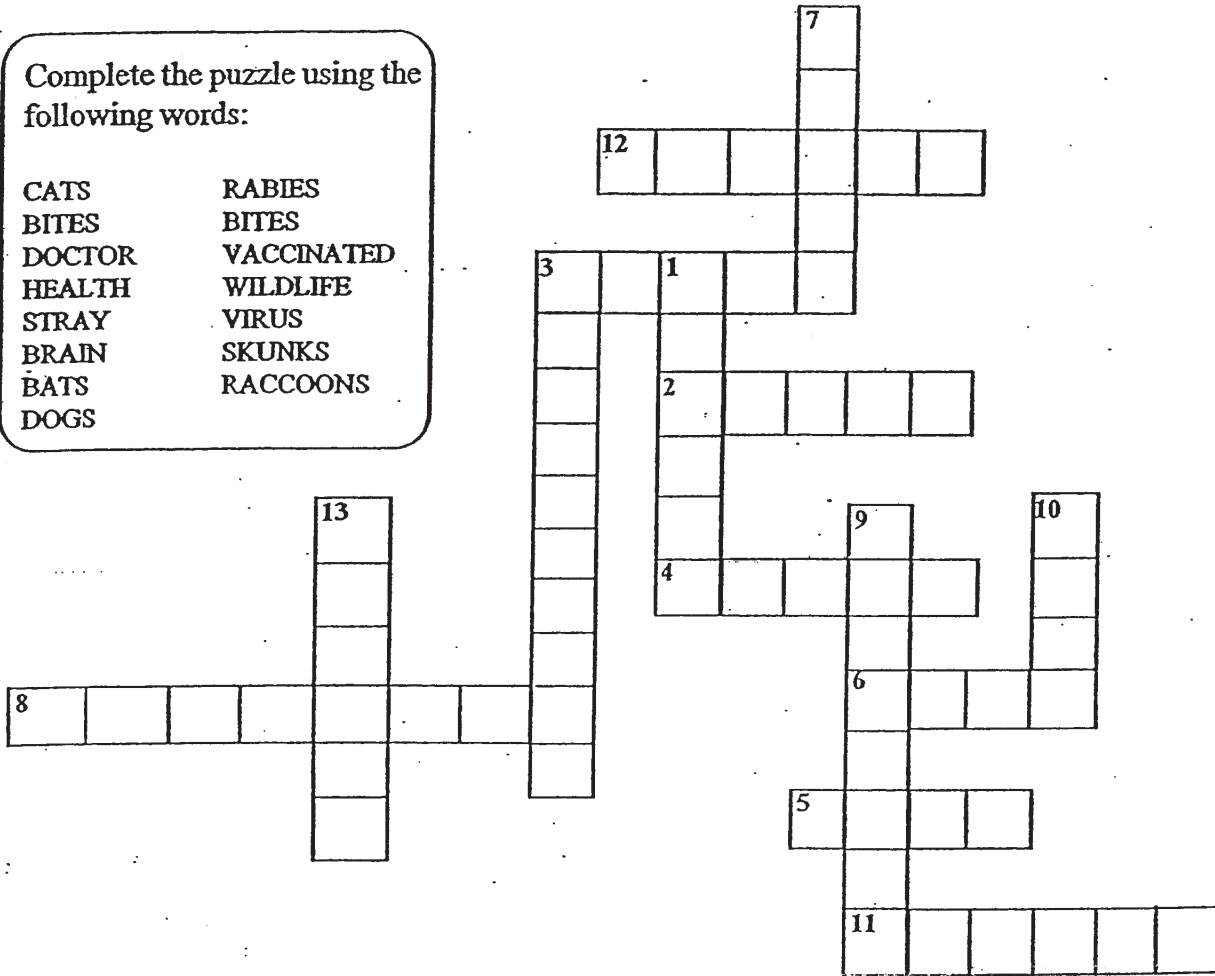
(Test your rabies knowledge)

1. You should stay a safe distance from wildlife and pets you don't know.  
 True       False
2. Cats that stay inside all day do not need to be vaccinated against rabies.  
 True       False
3. You can die from rabies.  
 True       False
4. An animal can have rabies and still look healthy.  
 True       False
5. It's OK to play with baby animals that you find outside.  
 True       False
6. You can get rabies from a rabid animal's scratch, bite or saliva.  
 True       False
7. You should tell an adult immediately if you have been in contact with any animal, especially stray and wild animals.  
 True       False
8. Dogs, cats, skunks, foxes, bats and raccoons can carry the rabies virus inside of them.  
 True       False

# Crossword Mania

Complete the puzzle using the following words:

CATS	RABIES
BITES	BITES
DOCTOR	VACCINATED
HEALTH	WILDLIFE
STRAY	VIRUS
BRAIN	SKUNKS
BATS	RACCOONS
DOGS	



1 is a deadly disease spread through the saliva of infected animals.

The only way to test an animal for rabies is to look at its 2 tissue.

Rabies is a **3 across**, not a bacteria.

Household pets need to be **3 down** against rabies so that they will not get rabies and then spread the virus to you.

To avoid getting rabies, never play with 4 dogs or cats.

5 and 6 need rabies booster shots at least every three years. Ask your vet.

You can get rabies if an infected animal 7 or scratches you.

It is OK to look at 8 from a distance, but never get too close.

Rabies is carried mainly by wild animals such as 9, 10 and 11.

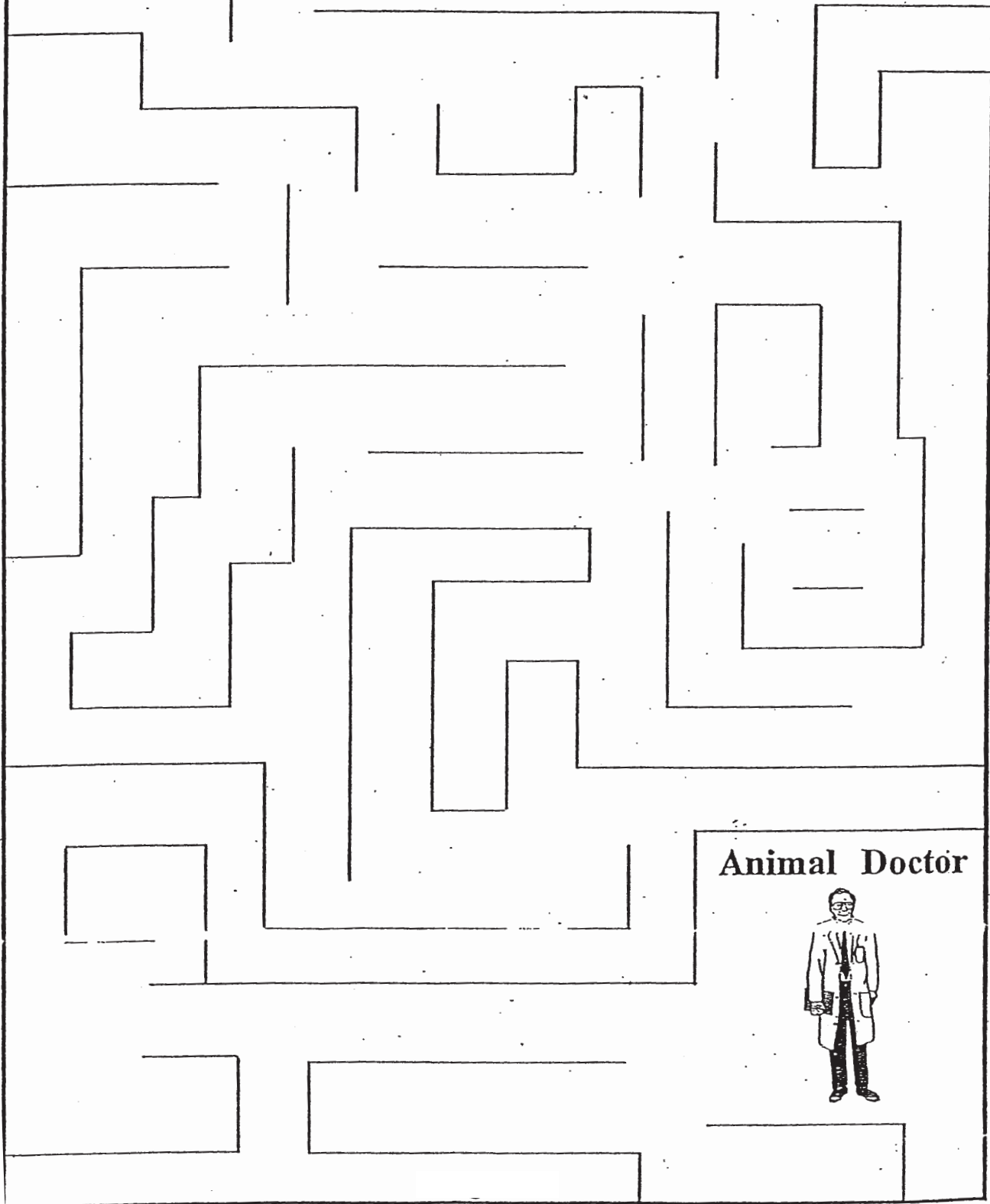
If you have come in contact with a wild or stray animal, you may need to visit your 12.

If you have any questions about rabies, you can call the Westchester County Department of 13.

Start



Help Rover and Fluffy  
get to the animal doctor  
for their rabies shot.



Animal Doctor



# Word Scramble

Can you unscramble the following jumbled word?

eibt      \_ \_ \_ \_

isaval    \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_

tca        \_ \_ \_

ocroacn    \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_

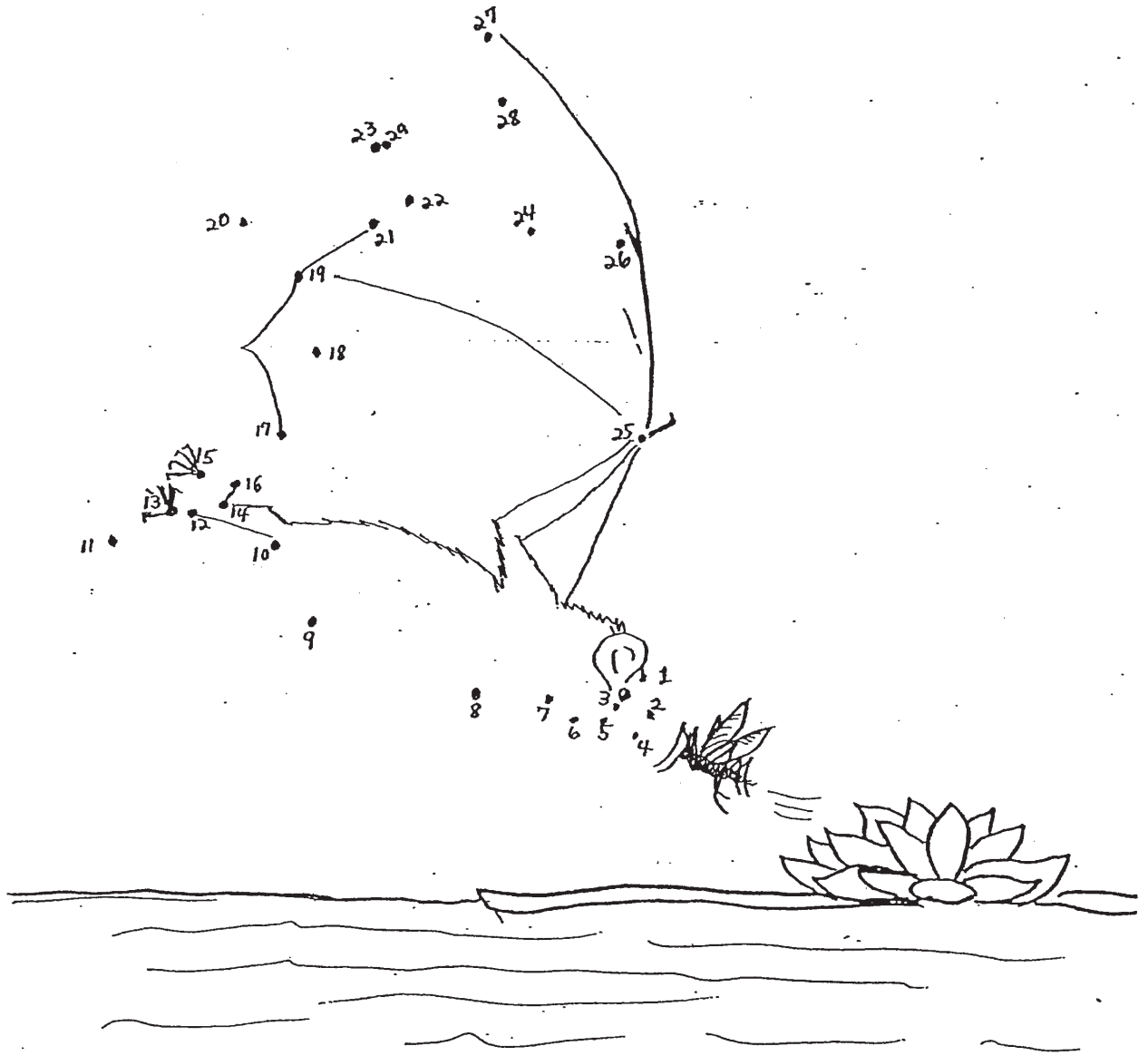
binra      \_ \_ \_ \_ \_

flidleiw    \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_

dbria      \_ \_ \_ \_ \_

rvisu      \_ \_ \_ \_ \_

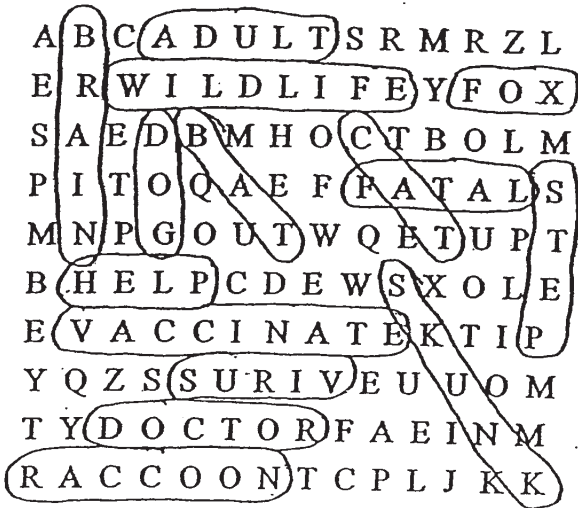
# Follow the dots to find out how bats help people



But, make sure you stay away from bats because they may carry rabies.

# Answer Key

## Page 6



## Word Scramble Page 12

- bite
- saliva
- cat
- raccoon
- brain
- wildlife
- rabid
- virus

## Page 5

Bats should NOT live in the:

- House
- Barn
- Building

## Page 8

Circle ALL the animals:

- Fox
- Skunk
- Cow
- Dog
- Cat
- Rabbit
- Raccoon
- Bat

## Stay Safe From rabies

### Page 7

- Rabies, brain
- virus
- vaccinate
- adult
- pet
- soap and water

### Page 9

- |          |         |
|----------|---------|
| 1. True  | 6. True |
| 2. False | 7. True |
| 3. True  | 8. True |
| 4. True  |         |
| 5. False |         |

## True or False

## Page 10

## Crossword Mania

- Rabies
- Brain
- (across) virus
- (down) Vaccinated
- Stray
- Dogs
- Cats
- Bites
- Wildlife
- Raccoons
- Bats
- Skunks
- Doctor
- Health