

# SUMMARY OF REPORTED ANIMAL BITES 2020

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# SUMMARY OF REPORTED ANIMAL BITES 2020 Allegheny County, PA

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# INTRODUCTION

Allegheny County Health  
Department's Administration  
Building in downtown Pittsburgh



# INTRODUCTION

Rabies is a viral pathogen that presents a significant public health problem in Pennsylvania and around the globe, as it is nearly always fatal once symptoms begin.<sup>1</sup> Globally, rabies kills an estimated 59,000 people annually, with dog bites responsible for up to 99% of human cases.<sup>2</sup> Children bear a significant burden of these deaths, as over 40% of human rabies cases occur in persons under 15 years of age.<sup>2</sup> Rabies has been designated as a Neglected Tropical Disease by the WHO, as most human rabies cases occur in rural areas of Asia and Africa.<sup>2</sup>

In the United States, wild animals, such as bats and raccoons, comprise more than 90% of reported animal rabies cases, and there are only one or two human cases per year.<sup>3</sup> In Pennsylvania, there have not been any cases of human rabies since 1984.<sup>1</sup> The low incidence of human rabies in the US is attributed to a robust public health surveillance and testing system, widespread availability of post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP), and rabies vaccination for pets.<sup>3</sup>

By Pennsylvania state law, all healthcare providers are required to report animal bites to the health department.<sup>4</sup> In the event a domestic animal bites a human, the animal is placed on in-home quarantine, usually for a period of ten days, and monitored for signs of rabies. If the animal is already deceased, the owner is asked to submit the animal for testing. If the animal cannot be quarantined or tested, or if it tests positive for rabies, the victim is directed to seek medical care to receive PEP. PEP includes human rabies immune globulin (HRIG) given on day 0 and human diploid cell vaccine (HDCV) given on days 0, 3, 7, and 14 after being evaluated by a healthcare provider.<sup>5</sup>

In Allegheny County, healthcare providers must report bites to the Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD). After notification, ACHD staff contact pet owners and bite victims to provide recommendations for quarantine of animals and treatment for bite victims. Deceased animals are submitted to the ACHD Public Health Laboratory for direct fluorescent antibody testing. This report describes the characteristics of persons bitten and treatment received for animal bites reported to the ACHD in 2020.

**IN THE UNITED STATES,  
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# METHODS



FIG.6

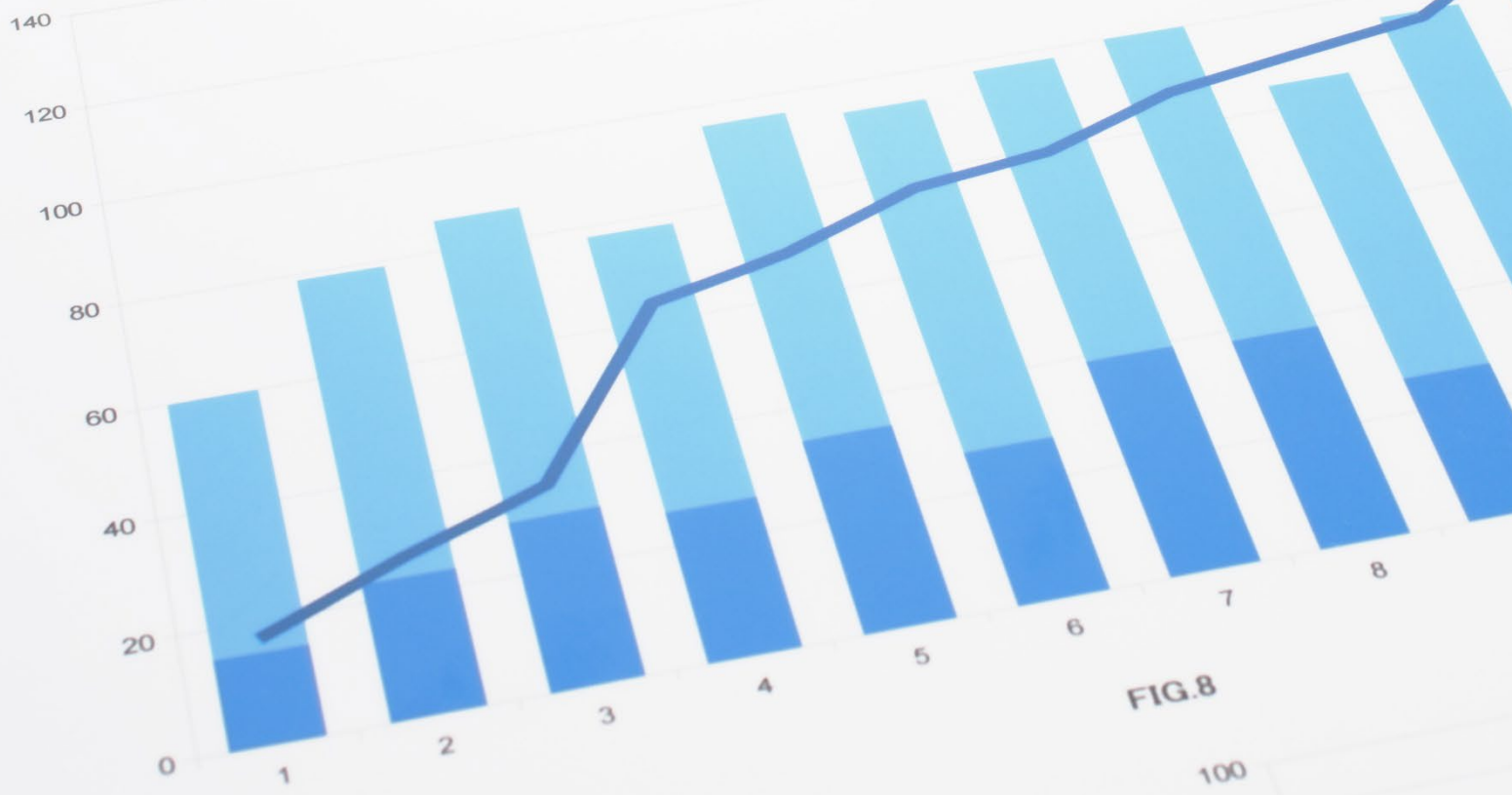
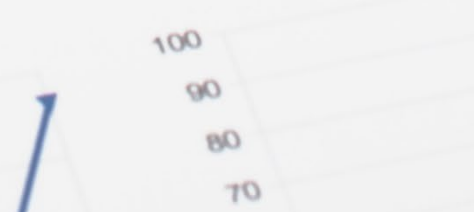


FIG.8

FIG.7



# METHODS

The ACHD receives bite reports from healthcare providers via a web-based electronic form or a faxed paper report form. Bite reports are also received from police officers if they respond to animal bite incidents. The ACHD staff enters data from faxed reports into the database. Staff then contact the bite victim and the pet owner, if applicable, to provide guidance and collect information missing from the original report form.

Bite data from 2020 were exported from the Oracle database to a Microsoft Excel file. These data were then imported to SAS version 9.4 for cleaning and analysis. Duplicate observations, identified by name and bite date, were deleted. Bites that occurred in 2019 but were reported in 2020 were also excluded from the analysis. All bite reports for an animal other than a mammal were deleted, as rabies is exclusive to mammals.

Descriptive statistics were generated in SAS. Tables and graphs were created in Microsoft Excel and Microsoft Word. Population age group estimates were obtained from the US Census Bureau to calculate rates per 100,000 population. Population data from 2019 were used because estimates for 2020 were not available at the time of writing this report.

Data on dog breeds licensed in Allegheny County were obtained from the Allegheny County Treasurer’s Office. Breeds involved in 2020 bite reports were compared to breeds licensed by the county. EpiInfo was used to calculate the chi-square statistics and p-values for breeds involved in bite reports. A p-value of 0.05 was used to establish statistical significance.

Data were extracted from prior annual reports and analyzed in Microsoft Excel in order to visualize the trends in animal bites over the eight-year period from 2013 to 2020. Due to the nature of the data from 2013-2016, the trends were analyzed in two-year intervals.

Note that the terms “bite” and “exposure” are used interchangeably throughout this report and include both animal bites and scratches.

**HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS ARE**

**REQUIRED**

**TO REPORT ANIMAL BITES.  
BITE REPORTS ARE ALSO  
RECEIVED FROM POLICE  
OFFICERS IF THEY RESPOND  
TO ANIMAL BITE INCIDENTS.**

# RESULTS



# RESULTS

In 2020, 2,252 animal bites were reported to ACHD. Almost all bite victims (96.1%) were Allegheny County residents. Almost all bite locations (99.6%) and animal owner addresses (99.0%) were within Allegheny County.

Most reported bites involved dogs (74.8%) or cats (19.2%). Bats (0.9%) and raccoons (0.5%) were the most common wild animals listed in bite reports. For 78 bites (3.5%), the type of animal involved was not reported ([Table 1](#)).

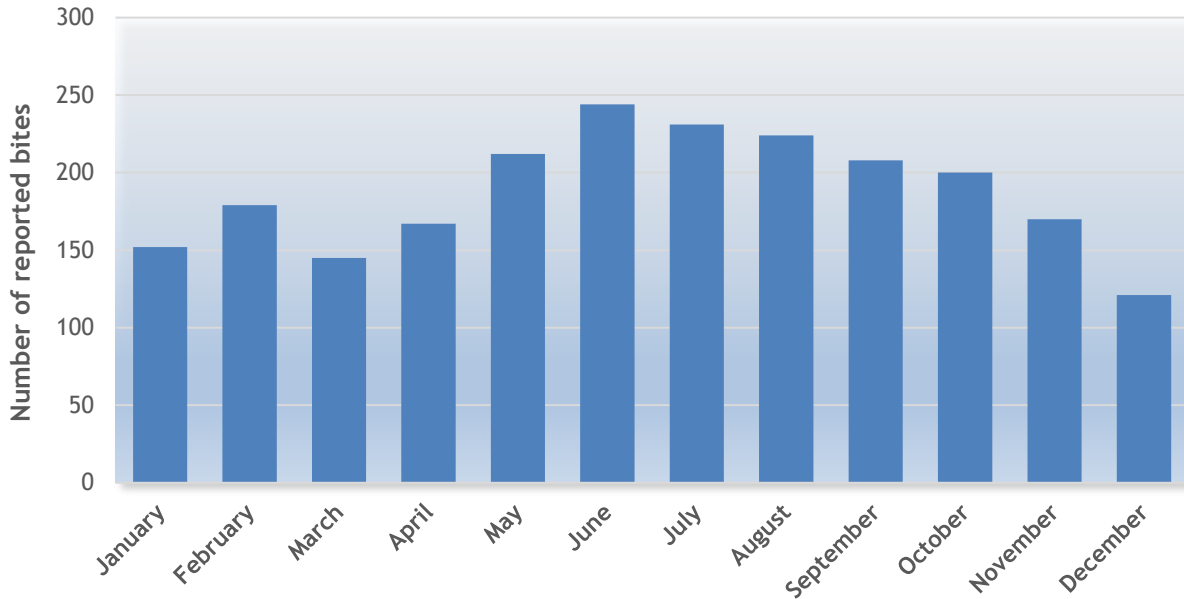
**Table 1. Bites reported by animal type, Allegheny County, 2020**

Species	N=2252	
	Frequency	Percent
<b>Dog</b>	1685	74.8
<b>Pet</b>	1537	68.3
<b>Stray/Wild/Feral</b>	35	1.6
<b>Unknown/Missing</b>	113	5.0
<b>Cat</b>	433	19.2
<b>Pet</b>	339	15.1
<b>Stray/Feral</b>	71	3.2
<b>Unknown/Missing</b>	23	1.0
<b>Bat</b>	20	0.9
<b>Raccoon</b>	11	0.5
<b>Groundhog</b>	5	0.2
<b>Monkey</b>	4	0.2
<b>Rat</b>	4	0.2
<b>Hamster</b>	2	0.1
<b>Horse</b>	2	0.1
<b>Mouse</b>	2	0.1
<b>Squirrel</b>	2	0.1
<b>Boar</b>	1	<0.1
<b>Mole</b>	1	<0.1
<b>Coatimundi</b>	1	<0.1
<b>Weasel</b>	1	<0.1
<b>Missing/Other</b>	78	3.5



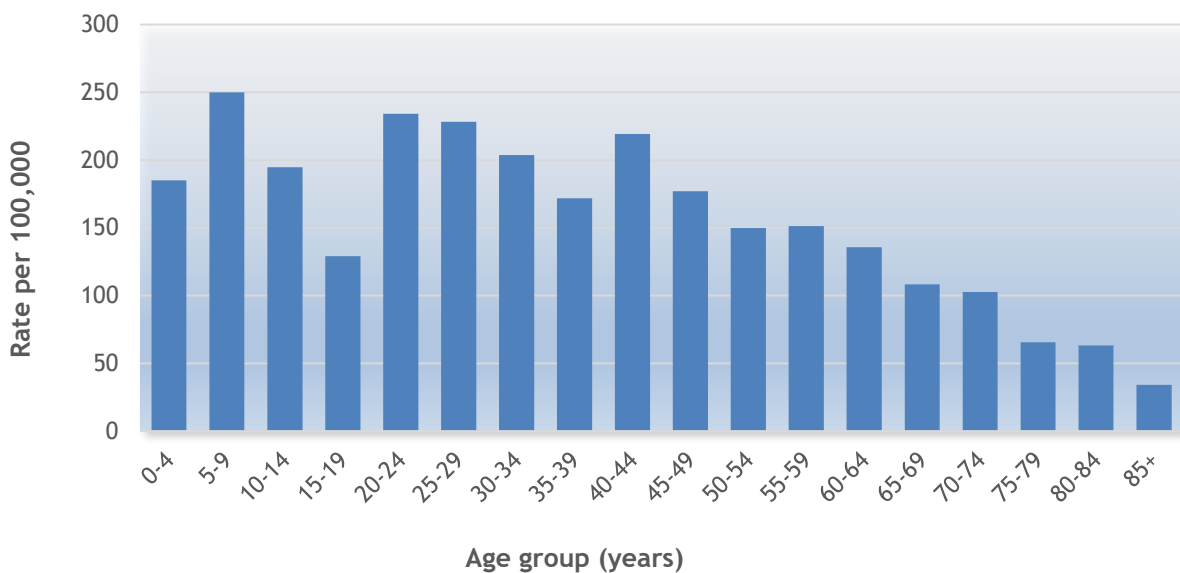
The number of reported bites was higher in the summer than in other seasons (Figure 1). The number of reported bites was lower than expected in the months of March and April, likely due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and associated restrictions.

**Figure 1. Distribution of reported animal bites by month, Allegheny County, 2020**



Bite victims ranged in age from less than one year to 91 years of age with a median of 33 years. Bite rates per 100,000 population were highest among individuals 5 to 9 years of age (Figure 2).

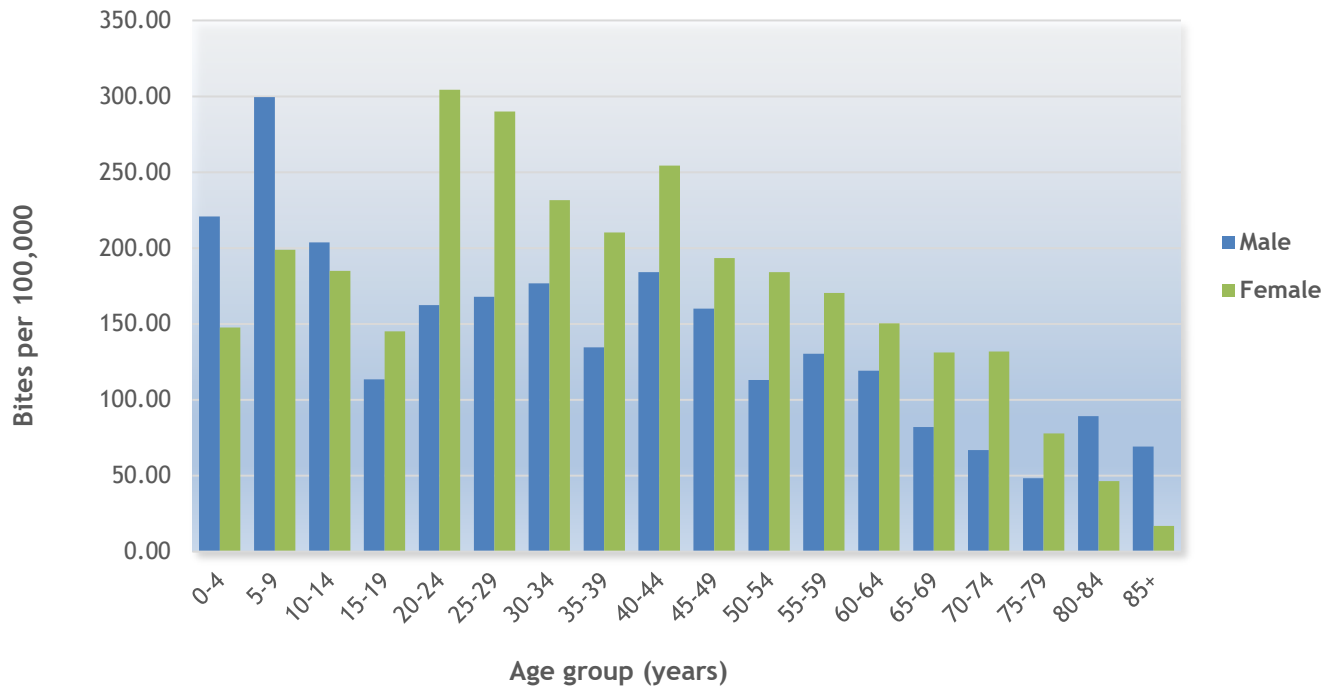
**Figure 2. Reported bite rate per 100,000 population by age group of victims, Allegheny County, 2020**



Population data taken from US Census 2019 Population Estimates

In 2020, 56.3% of bite victims were female and 43.7% were male. Male children had a higher bite rate than female children through ages 10-14 years, and elderly men aged 80+ had a higher bite rate than elderly women (Figure 3). Females had a higher bite rate than males in all other age groups (15-19 through 75-79 years).

**Figure 3. Reported bite rate per 100,000 population by age group and sex of victim, Allegheny County, 2020**



Population data from US Census 2019 Population Estimates

Although ACHD receives many reports of animal bites, few animals are tested for rabies, and very few animals involved in bite reports test positive (Table 2).

**Table 2. Number of animals tested for rabies and number positive among animals listed on bite reports, Allegheny County, 2020**

Species	Number known to be tested for rabies	Number positive
Dog	59	0
Cat	38	0
Bat	3	0
Raccoon	2	1
Groundhog	1	0
Weasel	1	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>1</b>

IN 2020,

# 2,252

ANIMAL BITES WERE REPORTED TO THE ALLEGHENY COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT.

The ACHD Public Health Laboratory also tests animals not involved in bite reports for rabies. Of the 486 animals found within Allegheny County and submitted for testing in 2020, 20 animals tested positive for rabies (Table 3). No dogs tested positive for rabies in 2020.

**Table 3. Number of animals found in Allegheny County and tested/positive for rabies by the ACHD Public Health Lab, 2020**

Animal	Total Number Tested	Number Positive
Cat	125	4
Bat	119	10
Dog	105	0
Raccoon	78	5
Groundhog	33	1
Opossum	7	0
Skunk	7	0
Squirrel	6	0
Fox	2	0
Mole	1	0
Mouse	1	0
Rabbit	1	0
Weasel	1	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>486</b>	<b>20</b>

Note: does not include specimens submitted to the lab with insufficient tissue for testing (n=8)

The circumstances under which the bites occurred are described in Table 4, but for over half (56.4%) of bites, circumstances were not reported. Among those with reported incident type, the most common were the animal got spooked, playing with the animal, and breaking up a fight. Situations in which the bite was not provoked (“at a community area and animal came up and bit the victim” and “walking on the road”) accounted for 151 (6.7%) bites.

The data on circumstances are shown separately for dogs and cats (Table 4). Situations noted more frequently for cat bites than dog bites include trying to capture the animal, performing a medical procedure, bathing or grooming the animal, and trying to put the animal in a crate.

**OF 486 ANIMALS FOUND WITHIN ALLEGHENY COUNTY AND TESTED IN THE ACHD LABORATORY,**

**TWENTY**

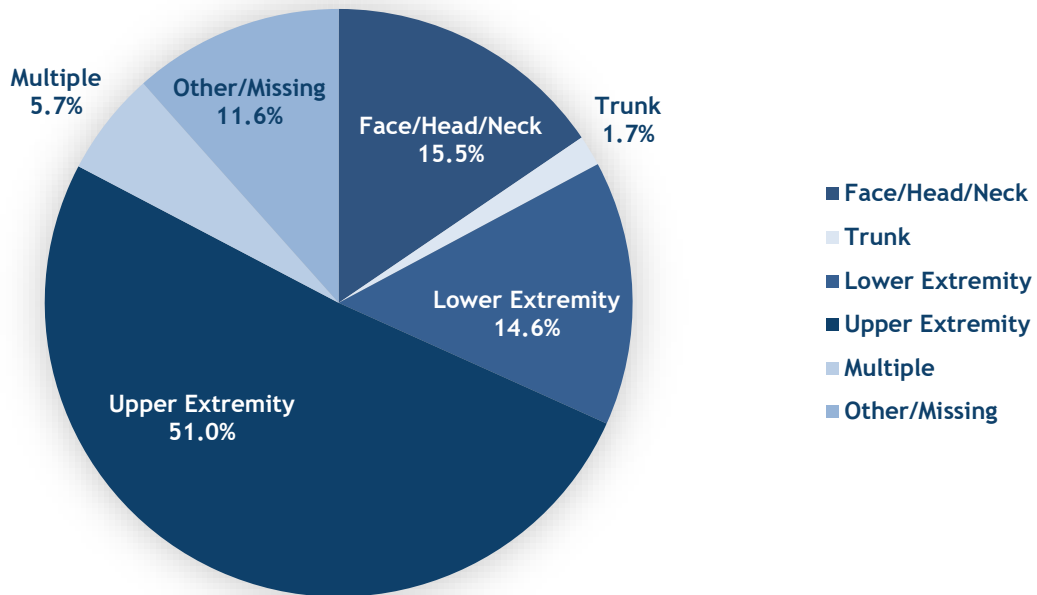
**WERE RABIES-POSITIVE – 4 CATS, 10 BATS, 5 RACCOONS AND A GROUNDHOG. NO DOGS (105 TESTED) WERE POSITIVE FOR RABIES.**

**Table 4. Type of incident for reported bites, Allegheny County, 2020**

Description of incident	All bites (n=2252)		Dog bites (n=1685)		Cat bites (n=433)	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
The animal got spooked	163	7.2	123	7.3	36	8.3
Playing with the animal	160	7.1	141	8.4	14	3.2
Breaking up a fight	122	5.4	108	6.4	11	2.5
At a community area and animal came up and bit the victim	116	5.2	105	6.2	7	1.6
Trying to pet the animal	47	2.1	41	2.4	6	1.4
Walking on the road	35	1.6	35	2.1	0	0
Performing a medical procedure	29	1.3	10	0.6	17	3.9
Taking something from the animal	25	1.1	22	1.3	2	0.5
Entering the owner's house	23	1.0	20	1.2	2	0.5
Trying to capture the animal	21	0.9	8	0.5	10	2.3
Trying to feed the animal	21	0.9	15	0.9	5	1.2
Walking into the owner's yard	20	0.9	20	1.2	0	0
Greeting a new animal	18	0.8	13	0.8	4	0.9
Bathing/ Grooming the animal	14	0.6	4	0.2	9	2.1
Trying to put the animal in a crate	14	0.6	0	0	12	2.8
Delivering the mail	12	0.5	11	0.7	0	0
Giving medication to or cleaning a wound on the animal	7	0.3	4	0.2	3	0.7
Touching a wound or painful spot on the animal	6	0.3	6	0.4	0	0
Bitten by a bat	4	0.2	-	-	-	-
Checking the animal for a collar and tags	3	0.1	1	0.1	2	0.5
Repairing/ Installing an item on the owner's property	3	0.1	2	0.1	0	0
Yelling at or hitting the animal	3	0.1	2	0.1	1	0.2
Other	117	5.2	89	5.3	14	3.2
Missing	1269	56.4	905	53.7	278	64.2

The majority of bites were to upper extremities (51.0%), followed by face/head/neck (15.5%) and lower extremities (14.6%). Nearly six percent of individuals were bitten in multiple locations. Only 1.7% of bites were solely on the trunk area. For 261 (11.6%) reports, the bite location was not listed (Figure 4).

**Figure 4. Location of exposure for bites reported, Allegheny County, 2020**



Note: upper extremity was defined as shoulder, arm, wrist, finger, and hand. Lower extremity was defined as leg, foot, hip, ankle, and toe. Face/head/neck was defined as face, head, neck, and ear. Trunk was defined as abdomen, chest, buttocks, and back. “Multiple” was defined as any incident that included more than one location on the body.

**ANIMAL BITES OCCURRED MOST FREQUENTLY IN THE**  
**SUMMER.**

# TREATMENT FOR BITES



# TREATMENT FOR BITES

Most (68.7%) bite victims were prescribed antibiotics, almost one third (32.0%) received a tetanus vaccine, and 4.3% received the full course of PEP. Approximately four percent of bite victims did not receive treatment.

Among victims bitten by dogs, 69.9% were prescribed antibiotics, 32.8% received a tetanus vaccine, and 3.2% received the full course of PEP. Among victims bitten by cats, 69.3% were prescribed antibiotics, 28.9% received a tetanus vaccine, and 3.8% received the full course of PEP (Table 5).

**Table 5. Type of treatment reported for animal bites, Allegheny County, 2020**

Treatment	All bites (n=2252)		Dog bites (n=1685)		Cat bites (n=433)	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Wound Cleansed	1477	65.6	1169	69.4	232	53.6
Antibiotic	1548	68.7	1177	69.9	300	69.3
Tetanus Shot	720	32.0	552	32.8	125	28.9
Started PEP	88	6.6	47	4.9	20	7.2
Completed PEP	55	4.3	30	3.2	10	3.8
Other Treatment	79	3.5	65	3.9	10	2.3
No Treatment	99	4.4	72	4.3	17	3.9

The most common antibiotic prescribed was amoxicillin/clavulanate (Augmentin), reported for 59.9% of all bite victims (Table 6). The type of antibiotic prescribed was not specified in 344 (22.2%) bite reports.

**Table 6. Type of antibiotic prescribed among bite victims receiving antibiotics, Allegheny County, 2020**

Antibiotic Treatment (n=1548)		
Antibiotic Prescribed	Frequency	Percent
Amoxicillin/Clavulanic Acid	927	59.9
Amoxicillin/Clavulanic Acid + Other	46	3.0
Doxycycline	60	3.9
Doxycycline + Other	25	1.6
Ampicillin/Sulbactam	38	2.5
Amoxicillin	19	1.2
Sulfamethoxazole/Trimethoprim	9	0.6
Topical	9	0.6
Clindamycin	8	0.5
Moxifloxacin	4	0.3
Other Single Antibiotic	27	1.7
Other Multiple Antibiotics	32	2.1
Not Specified	344	22.2

Among the 55 victims who received the full course of rabies PEP, most (52.7%) were exposed to an animal that could not be observed, and one victim (1.8%) was exposed to a rabid animal. Twenty-five victims (45.5%) received PEP for an invalid reason; either they chose to get PEP despite it not being recommended or an improper recommendation was made (Table 7).

**Table 7. Reason for completing rabies post-exposure prophylaxis, Allegheny County, 2020**

Rationale for completing PEP	N=55	
	Frequency	Percent
Exposed to rabid animal	1	1.8
<b>Animal not available for observation</b>	29	52.7
<b>Invalid reason</b>	25	45.5

Note: individuals who started PEP but stopped for any reason were not included in this analysis.

Among pets involved in bite incidents, the majority of both dogs and cats were reported to have ever received at least one rabies vaccine (76.6% and 71.8%, respectively).

Table 8 summarizes the dog breeds involved in bite reports. Only breeds involved in 7 or more bites are listed. The most common breeds involved in dog bites, other than mixed breeds (11.9%), were pit bulls (13.9%), German Shepherds (5.9%), and Labrador Retrievers (3.2%). For 30.6% of dog bites, no breed was listed in reports. Some breeds were overrepresented in the data compared with county licensing statistics. Breeds that accounted for significantly higher percentages of bite involvement compared with county license percentages are shown in bold font, and include pit bulls, bulldogs, huskies, and rottweilers.

TWENTY-FIVE BITE VICTIMS RECEIVED POST-EXPOSURE PROPHYLAXIS (PEP) UNNECESSARILY. DOMESTIC ANIMALS CAN BE QUARANTINED AND OBSERVED FOR TEN DAYS BEFORE ADMINISTRATION OF PEP. MOST DOMESTIC ANIMALS HAVE BEEN VACCINATED FOR RABIES.



**Table 8. Dog breeds involved in bites and dog breeds licensed, Allegheny County, 2020**

Breed	Dog bites (n=1685)		Dogs licensed in Allegheny County (n= 77467)		p-value (Chi-square)
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	
<b>Pit Bull</b>	234	13.9	3180	4.1	<b>&lt;0.001</b>
Mixed Breed	201	11.9	11179	14.4	0.004
German Shepherd	99	5.9	4065	5.2	0.25
Labrador Retriever	53	3.2	4611	6.0	<0.001
<b>Bulldog</b>	40	2.4	1322	1.7	<b>0.04</b>
<b>Husky</b>	33	2.0	710	0.9	<b>&lt;0.001</b>
<b>Rottweiler</b>	30	1.8	800	1.0	<b>0.003</b>
Australian Shepherd	28	1.7	909	1.2	0.07
<b>Labradoodle</b>	27	1.6	584	0.8	<b>&lt;0.001</b>
<b>Mastiff</b>	27	1.6	359	0.5	<b>&lt;0.001</b>
Chihuahua	24	1.4	3062	4.0	<0.001
Boxer	23	1.4	2104	2.7	<0.001
Golden Retriever	23	1.4	3895	5.0	<0.001
Beagle	20	1.2	3509	4.5	<0.001
Border Collie	17	1.0	903	1.2	0.55
<b>Jack Russell</b>	17	1.0	290	0.4	<b>&lt;0.001</b>
Yorkshire Terrier	13	0.8	2509	3.2	<0.001
Corgi	12	0.7	342	0.4	0.1
Dachshund	12	0.7	1777	2.3	<0.001
Great Dane	11	0.7	476	0.6	0.84
Cocker Spaniel	10	0.6	710	0.9	0.17
Collie	10	0.6	447	0.6	0.93
Doberman Pinscher	10	0.6	419	0.5	0.77
Breeds with <7 bites	196	11.6	-	-	-
Breed not specified	515	30.6	-	-	-

Breeds shown in bold fonts are **significantly** overrepresented in animal bite reports compared to county license data from 2020.

Note: if two or more breeds were listed as a dog breed (e.g. pit bull + mastiff), breed was categorized as the first breed listed (pit bull). If a breed was listed as a single breed mix (e.g. pit bull mix), the breed was categorized as a single breed (pit bull).

**ALL DOGS TESTED (105)  
DID NOT HAVE RABIES.**

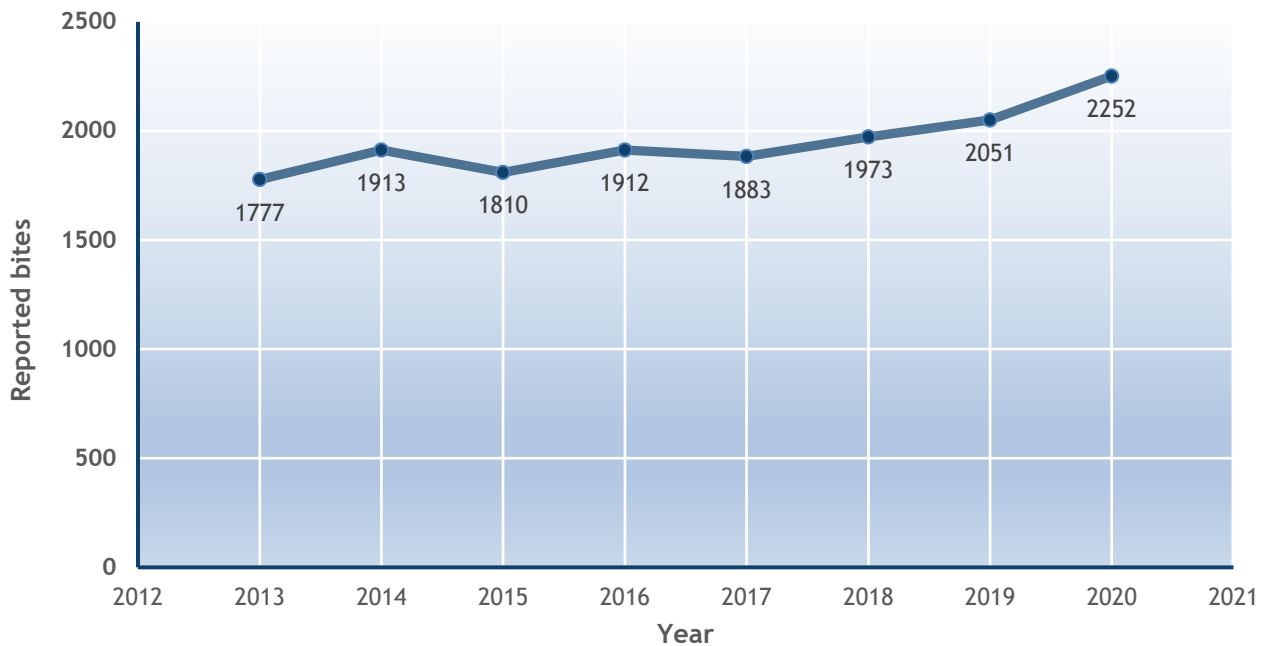
**TRENDS IN  
REPORTED  
BITES,  
2013-2020**



# TRENDS IN REPORTED BITES, 2013-2020

From 2013 to 2020, the annual number of reported animal bites has increased by 27%, from 1,777 bites in 2013 to 2,252 bites in 2020 (Figure 5).

**Figure 5. Reported bites by year, Allegheny County, 2013-2020**



From 2013 to 2020, the number of bites by dogs has increased. The number of bites by cats and raccoons has not changed much, whereas exposures to bats have decreased (Table 9).

**Table 9. Number of exposures by select species, Allegheny County, 2013-2020**

Year	Number of exposures n (%)			
	Dog	Cat	Raccoon	Bat
2013-14	2522 (68.3)	902 (24.4)	26 (0.7)	89 (2.4)
2015-16	2701 (72.6)	838 (22.5)	21 (0.6)	58 (1.6)
2017-18	2807 (72.8)	890 (23.1)	20 (0.5)	39 (1.0)
2019-20	3165 (73.6)	928 (21.6)	23 (0.5)	38 (0.9)

The percentage of reported bites treated with antibiotics has decreased from 2013 to 2020, for both dog and cat bites (**Table 10**).

**Table 10. Treatment of reported bites with antibiotics, Allegheny County, 2013-2020**

Year	Bites treated with antibiotics (%)	Dog bites treated with antibiotics (%)	Cat bites treated with antibiotics (%)
2013-14	72.2	74.8	75.8
2015-16	77.0	79.3	79.6
2017-18	60.9	63.6	64.8
2019-20	65.6	66.3	67.5

The proportion of bite victims completing PEP decreased from 6.1% in 2013-14 to 3.3% in 2019-20. (**Table 11**).

**Table 11. Bite victims completing rabies PEP, Allegheny County, 2013-2020**

Year	No. (%)
2013-14	226 (6.1)
2015-16	192 (5.2)
2017-18	207 (5.4)
2019-20	141 (3.3)

THE HIGHEST RATE OF ANIMAL BITES OCCURRED AMONG THOSE AGED 5-9, WITH 250 PER 100,000 CHILDREN OF THIS AGE BITTEN. YOUNG BOYS OF THIS AGE WERE

**50% MORE LIKELY**

TO BE BITTEN THAN GIRLS. HOWEVER, WOMEN AGED 15 AND ABOVE WERE BITTEN MORE FREQUENTLY THAN MEN.

# DISCUSSION



## DISCUSSION

In summary, among the 2,252 animal bites reported to the ACHD in 2020, most involved dogs, which were implicated on 75% of all bite reports and responsible for more than 1,200 more reported bites than cats, the second most reported animal. The most common wild animals involved in bites were bats, raccoons, and groundhogs.

Of animals listed on bite reports, 104 were known to be tested for rabies; only one animal tested positive, a raccoon. Among the 486 animals tested by the ACHD Public Health Laboratory, 20 were positive for rabies; of these, 16 (80%) were wild animals (bats, raccoons, and groundhogs). Wild animals remain the main threat of rabies in Allegheny County.

By law, rabies vaccines are required for dogs and cats in Pennsylvania once the animal is three months of age, and must be maintained.<sup>4</sup> However, this vaccination requirement is rarely enforced. Proof of rabies vaccination is not required to license a dog in Allegheny County or the City of Pittsburgh. Data on when the last shot was given and the vaccination expiration date were unavailable for almost all the bite reports, so we were unable to assess if animal owners were ensuring that their pets' rabies vaccinations were up to date.

Certain dog breeds were overrepresented in bite reports compared to county licensing statistics in 2020, including pit bulls, bulldogs, rottweilers, mastiffs, huskies, Jack Russell terriers and labradoodles. These dogs may be more aggressive, or their bites cause more severe injuries because of their size. Of these breeds, only pit bulls accounted for >50 bites

Animal bites can be a source of infection and should be properly cleansed.<sup>3</sup> Thorough washing of the wound plays an important part in preventing rabies in bite victims.<sup>2</sup> Our data indicate that 66% of reported bites were cleansed, but this is most likely an underestimate as this information may not be recorded on the bite form. Antibiotics were prescribed for over two-thirds of bites in Allegheny County in 2020. According to the American Academy of Family Practice (AAFP) guidelines, antibiotic prophylaxis should be considered for all bites requiring closure and for high-risk bites. Cat bites are considered high risk for infection,<sup>5</sup> but according to ACHD bite data, only 69% of cat bite victims received antibiotics in 2020. The AAFP antibiotic of choice, amoxicillin/clavulanate (Augmentin), was prescribed in approximately 60% of bite reports.<sup>5</sup>

In Allegheny County in 2020, 32% of victims received a tetanus vaccine. This is recommended if the victim had not received the tetanus vaccine in the last ten years or if vaccination status is unknown.<sup>3</sup> If a victim is unsure when they last received a tetanus shot, healthcare providers

should consult the Pennsylvania Statewide Immunization Information System (PA-SIIS) to see when the last tetanus vaccine was administered; however, PA-SIIS does not include vaccines given out of state or by providers who do not submit data. We are not able to assess the appropriateness of tetanus vaccination from bite report data.

The PEP regimen should only be administered if someone is exposed to 1) a rabid animal, 2) an animal that cannot be quarantined for observation, or 3) an animal that cannot not be tested for rabies. Of bite victims reported to ACHD, twenty-five reportedly completed the PEP regimen unnecessarily. More persons began the regimen but stopped, most likely because the biting animal tested negative or was located and quarantined.

The number of animal bites reported to ACHD has increased by 27% from 2013 to 2020. This trend may reflect an increase in the number of animal bites annually, or it may reflect an increase in care-seeking behavior or improved reporting within this timeframe. The proportion of reported bites by high-risk wild animals, bats and raccoons, has decreased since 2013.

The proportion of bites treated with antibiotics has also generally decreased in this timeframe, which is appropriate for dog bites, but concerning for cat bites. The AAFP guidelines suggest that all bites with a high-risk of infection, such as cat bites, be treated with antibiotics. The proportion of bite victims completing PEP has decreased from 2013 to 2020, from 6.1% to 3.3%.

IN ALLEGHENY COUNTY IN 2020,  
**32% OF**  
**VICTIMS**  
RECEIVED A TETANUS VACCINE. THIS  
IS RECOMMENDED IF THE VICTIM  
HAD NOT RECEIVED THE TETANUS  
VACCINE IN THE LAST TEN YEARS OR  
IF VACCINATION STATUS IS  
UNKNOWN.

# RECOMMENDATIONS





# RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Avoid contact with wild animals.** Do not attempt to feed, touch, or take in wild animals as pets. Avoid contact with dead wild animals to prevent rabies exposure.
2. **Pet owners should comply with Pennsylvania’s rabies vaccine regulations for pets.** All pet owners should have their pets vaccinated by three months of age, and rabies vaccinations should be kept up to date throughout the pet’s lifetime. This will protect pets and their owners from rabies virus. Pets should be supervised in situations where they could encounter wildlife.
3. **Health care providers should be familiar with the protocol for treatment of animal bites, rabies PEP, and reporting requirements.** Health care providers should follow current guidelines and recommendations for treating animal bites. Health care providers should only recommend/provide the PEP vaccine series for rabies if the victim was exposed to an animal that had rabies, an animal that could not be observed during a quarantine period, or an animal that could not be tested for rabies. Health care providers should check PA-SIIS for information on tetanus vaccinations, although the database may not be complete. Additionally, providers should continue to report bites to the health department.
4. **Deceased animals should be submitted for rabies testing.** If pets involved in bites are euthanized during the quarantine period, the animal should be submitted for rabies testing. If bats are found in the home in rooms where people were sleeping, they should be captured and submitted for testing at the ACHD laboratory. To safely capture a bat, wear thick work gloves and place a container over the bat when it lands. Slip a piece of cardboard underneath the container and tape it shut. Be careful to avoid contact with the bat. If there is no reason to suspect contact between the bat and humans or pets, release the bat outdoors.

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# REFERENCES



## REFERENCES

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