Rabies in the US Fatality Report

B.C. man dies of rabies after contact with a bat on Vancouver Island

The man was in contact with a bat in mid-May but did not develop symptoms compatible with rabies until six weeks later.

Dr. Bonnie Henry, provincial health officer, has confirmed a rare case of viral rabies infection in a British Columbia resident, who has subsequently died.

A B.C. man has died of rabies after coming in contact with a bat on Vancouver Island.

The Ministry of Health says the man, who has been identified on social media as 21-year-old Nick Major, was in contact with a bat in mid-May, but did not develop symptoms compatible with rabies until six weeks later.

Major, who worked as a taekwondo instructor at Cascadia Martial Arts in Parksville, died Saturday at St. Paul’s Hospital in Vancouver.

Nick Major, 21, died from rabies on Saturday in St. Paul’s Hospital in Vancouver.

The Ministry of Health says he had no visible bite or scratch marks.

“The thing with bats is their teeth are very small and their bite marks can be microscopic and you might not even notice them,” said Dr. Bonnie Henry, B.C.’s provincial health officer. “Bats also lick themselves and the rabies virus has been found on the outside of their body, so if a bat brushes against you the virus can be transmitted through a mucus membrane, via your eyes or mouth.”

Henry, says family members, close community contacts and health-care workers who cared for this person are being assessed and given post-exposure rabies preventive measures, if needed.

It’s the first confirmed death from rabies in B.C. since 2003.

In Canada, there have been only 24 known cases since the 1920s, with the most recent in Ontario in 2012 and Alberta in 2007.