

Zoonotic Diseases: Information and Prevention within SRPMIC

The SRPMIC (Community) is home to diverse wildlife, natural spaces, and household pets. While most interactions with animals are safe, some diseases can pass between animals and people. These are called **zoonotic diseases**. Our goal is to provide clear, practical guidance to help Community residents stay informed and reduce their risk in everyday life, during outdoor activities, and when caring for pets.

What Are Zoonotic Diseases?

Zoonotic diseases are illnesses that can be transmitted between animals and humans.

Transmission can occur through:

- Direct contact with animals
 - Including bites or scratches
- Contact with animal waste or contaminated environments
- Insect vectors such as mosquitoes
- Handling or preparing game or animal products
- Improperly prepared meats

Zoonotic diseases occur naturally in the environment and with simple precautions, most risks can be effectively managed.

Zoonotic Diseases Most Relevant to SRPMIC

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI)

HPAI affects wild birds, domestic poultry, and mammals. Community residents who hunt, handle birds, or keep backyard poultry should be aware of signs of illness in birds and avoid contact with sick or dead animals.

Hantavirus

Hantavirus is associated with rodent droppings, urine, and nesting materials. It can become airborne when disturbed in enclosed spaces such as sheds, storage areas, or abandoned buildings. Using proper cleanup methods can help prevent exposure.

Rabies

Rabies spreads through bites or scratches from infected animals. Although rabies is most likely to be transmitted by wildlife such as coyotes, bats, skunks, and raccoons, it can also be spread by domestic animals, such as dogs and cats. For this reason, always vaccinate your pets (For pet vaccination information visit [Public Health | Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community](#)). Avoid contact with wildlife and if you see any signs of unusual behavior in wildlife report this immediately to SRPMIC Environmental Protection & Natural Resources at 480.362.7500. If you see signs of unusual behavior in domestic animals, please report this to SRPMIC Health & Human Services at 480.362.2603.

Signs of rabies include:

- Loss of fear of humans
- Changes in behavior, such as nocturnal animals being out in the daytime
- Unusual aggression
- Excessive salivation (may appear “foam-like”)

Dos and Don'ts for Preventing Zoonotic Diseases

Dos

- **Do** wash hands after handling animals or being outdoors.
- **Do** keep pets up-to-date on vaccinations.
- **Do** use gloves and face masks when cleaning areas containing animal waste; especially if sweeping or vacuuming rodent droppings.
- **Do** wash hands and equipment with soap and water after processing game.
- **Do** report sick or dead wildlife to SRPMIC Environmental Protection & Natural Resources at 480-362-7500.

Don'ts

- **Don't** touch wildlife, unfamiliar animals or animal carcasses.
- **Don't** hunt animals that appear sick or behave abnormally.
- **Don't** consume raw or undercooked meat.

If You Think You've Been Exposed

Most exposures can be evaluated and managed effectively. If you believe you may have come into contact with a zoonotic disease:

- Wash hands or exposed skin with soap and water.
- Monitor for symptoms such as fever, respiratory issues, or unusual illness, and contact a healthcare provider for guidance.
- If pets are involved, immediately consult a veterinarian and report this to the SRPMIC Health & Human Services Public Health Hotline at 480.362.2603.
- If wildlife is involved, immediately report this to SRPMIC PD at 480.850.9230.

Additional Resources

For more information, Community residents can visit:

- [SRPMIC Health & Human Services](#) (SRPMIC guidance and disease prevention information)
- [Arizona Department of Health Services – Zoonotic Diseases](#) (Statewide guidance and disease updates)
- [Maricopa County](#)
- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**
 - [Avian Influenza](#)
 - [Hantavirus](#)
 - [Rabies](#)
- [U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service](#) (Wildlife safety and reporting)
- [USDA APHIS](#) (Animal health and invasive species resources)