# Wisconsin Woman Jeanna Giese Makes History as First Rabies Survivor Without Vaccine



In 2004, Jeanna Giese from Wisconsin became the first person to survive rabies without a vaccine after being bitten by a bat in her local church. At the time of the bite, Giese was 15 years old. The bite appeared minor, and initially, she did not seek medical attention. However, three weeks later, Giese developed severe symptoms including tiredness, double vision, and vomiting, which led to her hospitalization.

After testing at the Children's Hospital of Wisconsin in Milwaukee, Giese was diagnosed with rabies. With a prognosis of near-certain death, Dr. Rodney Willoughby proposed an experimental treatment. This involved placing her in an induced coma to suppress brain activity and prevent lethal brain inflammation, a method later known as the "Milwaukee Method." Remarkably, the treatment was successful, and Giese eventually recovered after spending two weeks in a coma and undergoing extensive rehabilitation over two years to relearn basic functions.

Giese's survival was groundbreaking, as rabies has a nearly 100% fatality rate once symptoms appear. The Milwaukee Method used in her case has since been used to treat other patients successfully.

Jeanna Giese went on to graduate, marry Scot Frassetto in 2014, and have three children. She now works at the Children's Museum of Fond du Lac in Wisconsin, continuing to share her story to raise awareness about rabies treatments.