

RABIES EXPOSURE



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

What constitutes an exposure?

- There was a bite from an animal to a human penetrating the skin (Bite Exposure).
- There was saliva contact from an animal to a human's open cut or mucous membrane (Nonbite Exposure).
- A bat is found in the same room with a sleeping person, an unattended child, an intoxicated person, or anyone unable to confirm that they were NOT bitten.

There was a bat in my house. Should my family get rabies post exposure prophylaxis?

Family members need prophylaxis if EXPOSED (see above) AND

- the bat was tested and found to be rabies positive, indeterminate, or unsatisfactory to test, or
- the bat was not caught and therefore cannot be tested.

I can't exclude bats from my house, should I get pre-exposure prophylaxis?

- If bats are found routinely inside the home and the house cannot be "bat proofed", consult your health care provider to consider pre-exposure vaccination. Patients who have already received a rabies vaccine series will still need two human rabies vaccines (day 0 and 3) after subsequent rabies exposures.

What are the rules for animal bite quarantine in my area?

- Domestic animals are generally observed for 10 days, postexposure prophylaxis should be administered at the first sign of rabies in a dog, cat, or ferret that has bitten someone. If the animal exhibits clinical signs of rabies, it should be euthanized immediately and tested.

Do all animals that bite humans need to be tested for rabies?

- If the biting animal is a rodent (rat, mouse, squirrel, guinea pig, chipmunk or gerbil), a marsupial (opossum) or lagomorphs (rabbit), we usually do not recommend testing because the possibility of rabies is extremely low. However, if one of these animals exhibited unusual behavior, if the bite was unprovoked, contact the Nebraska Humane Society, 402-444-7800 ext 1.

What are the recommendations for rabies postexposure prophylaxis (Rabies vaccination)?

- The CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommends the use of rabies immune globulin (RIG) directly in the wound, if possible, in combination with a 4-dose vaccination schedule for most people, a 2-dose schedule for previously vaccinated persons, and a 5-dose schedule for persons with altered immunocompetence. The 4-dose regimen should be administered intramuscularly, with the first dose administered as soon as possible after exposure (day 0), and on days 3, 7, and 14 after the first vaccination.
- Additional information regarding pre and postexposure prophylaxis can be found at:
 - o Human Rabies Prevention – United States, 2008 (ACIP) - <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/pdf/rr/rr5703.pdf>
 - o Use of a Reduced (4-Dose) Vaccine Schedule for Postexposure Prophylaxis to Human Rabies, 2010 (ACIP) – <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5902a1.htm>

Where can I find more information on human rabies prevention?

- Douglas County Health Department (DCHD) – <http://www.douglascountyhealth.com/disease-a-immunization/rabies>
- Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services - <http://www.hhs.state.ne.us/epi/epirabies.htm>
- Centers for Disease Control - <http://www.cdc.gov/rabies/>

For **exposure assessments** and **questions regarding administration of postexposure prophylaxis**, contact DCHD's Epidemiology Section at: 402-444-7214 (8:00 am to 4:30 pm) or 402-444-7000 (after hours, request epidemiologist on call).

For **environmental consultations and bat-proofing**, contact DCHD's Environmental Health at 402-444-7489.

For **animal control, capture, and testing**, contact the Nebraska Humane Society at 402-444-7800 ext 1.