



Rabies

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What is Rabies?

Rabies is a virus that only infects the nervous system of mammals, including humans.

What is Rabies Exposure?

Rabies exposure occurs when a human comes into contact with the rabies virus, mainly through a bite from a rabid animal. Exposure can also occur if the virus comes into contact with broken skin, like a scrape, or enters the eyes or mouth.

What are common sources of Rabies?

- ✿ Wildlife like bats, skunks, foxes, coyotes and raccoons are the animals most likely to get rabies. Pets like dogs, cats, or ferrets can also become infected with rabies; however, rabies can be prevented by having your pet vaccinated regularly by a licensed veterinarian. Any mammal can be a source of rabies but the ones listed above are the most common.
- ✿ Being exposed to rabies by a bat doesn't always take a bite. Exposure must be considered when there has been direct contact between a human and a bat, unless the person can be certain a bite, scratch or mucous membrane contact (eyes or mouth) did not occur. Potential exposure must also be considered if a bat is found in the same room as a person who is sleeping, mentally disabled, intoxicated, or an unattended infant or child.

What do I do if I am bitten or exposed?

- ✿ Immediately wash the area with soap and warm water.
- ✿ Contact a physician.
- ✿ Get the contact information of the owner of the pet who bit you.
- ✿ If you were bitten by a wild animal, record its location and report it to animal control.
- ✿ In the case of a bat, if possible, safely catch the bat and submit for testing.

Rabies exposure is not a medical emergency, but it is a medical urgency!

What is Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP)?

Rabies post-exposure prophylaxis is a series of four shots containing a rabies vaccine for humans. The shots are given over a two-week period. Along with the initial vaccination, a dose of Human Rabies Immune Globulin is administered to help boost protection against the rabies virus.

How can Rabies be prevented?

The best way to prevent rabies in your pets is to have them vaccinated against rabies. Avoid contact with all wild animals. Do not keep wild animals as pets. Animals which have had contact with a possible rabid animal should be reported to animal control. Any person(s) who have been bitten or otherwise exposed to an animal that might have rabies should be reported immediately to the local health department.

For further information, contact the Unified Government Health Department Communicable Disease Control program at (913) 573-6712.

Animal Type to Post-Exposure Prophylaxis Table Provided by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)		
Animal Type	Evaluation and Disposition of Animals	Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) Recommendations
Dogs, Cats, Ferrets	Healthy and available for a 10-day observation period	Should not begin PEP unless animal develops clinical signs of rabies
	Rabid or suspected rabid	Immediately begin PEP
	Unknown (escaped)	Consult public health officials
Raccoons, skunks, foxes, bats and most other carnivorous mammals	Regarded as rabid unless animal is proven to be negative by laboratory test	Immediately begin PEP
Livestock, horses, rodents (squirrels, hamsters, guinea pigs, gerbils, chipmunks, rats, mice), rabbits, hares and other mammals <i>These bites rarely require rabies PEP</i>	Consider individually on a case-by-case basis	Consult public health officials

References

- CDC Rabies website: <http://www.cdc.gov/rabies>
 KDHE Rabies Website: http://www.kdheks.gov/epi/human_animal_health.htm#rabies
 World Health Organization: <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs099/en/>