



ALLEGHENY COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT (ACHD) RABIES EXPOSURE PROTOCOL SUMMARY

INFECTIOUS DISEASE PROGRAM 412-578-8062

DETERMINATION FOR POST-EXPOSURE TREATMENT WITH RABIES BIOLOGICS IS MADE BASED ON THE FOLLOWING:

- A. Assessment of exposure, including a bite, scratch, mucous membrane, or other saliva exposure (e.g. handling the animal with cuts on hands without gloves).
- B. HIGH-RISK ANIMALS (e.g., RACCOONS, BATS, FOXES, SKUNKS, COYOTES, and GROUNDHOGS)
 - 1. If the high-risk animal is available, it should be tested immediately for rabies. Post-exposure rabies immunization may be delayed until the test result is available, usually within 24 hours. If the wild animal is not available for testing, complete prophylaxis, including Human Rabies Immune Globulin (HRIG) and Human Diploid Cell Vaccine (HDCV), is indicated.

**THE FEDERAL CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION (CDC)
APPROVED RABIES POST-EXPOSURE PROTOCOL IS:**

- 1. **HUMAN RABIES IMMUNE GLOBULIN (HRIG)**. Given for ALL exposures. Dosage determined by person's weight. ONE TIME dose is given with first dose of human diploid cell vaccine (HDCV).
- 2. **HUMAN DIPLOID CELL VACCINE (HDCV)** a series of four (4) intramuscular (IM) injections given on days 0 – 3 – 7 and day 14.

- 2. Rabies post-exposure prophylaxis is recommended for all persons with bite, scratch, or mucous membrane exposure to a BAT, unless the BAT is available for testing and is found to be negative for rabies. Post-exposure prophylaxis may be appropriate even in the absence of demonstrable bite, scratch or mucous membrane exposure, in situations in which there is reasonable probability that such exposure may have occurred.

C. DOMESTIC ANIMALS (e.g., DOGS, CATS or FERRETS)

1. If the domestic animal is healthy and available, it may be observed for ten (10) days from the date of the bite. If the animal remains healthy for the observation period, prophylaxis with rabies vaccine is not necessary.
2. If the domestic animal is sickly, or unusually aggressive, it should be euthanized and tested for rabies. Decision to give rabies vaccine may be delayed until the test result is available, usually within 24 hours.
3. IF A STRAY ANIMAL CANNOT BE LOCATED AND CAPTURED WITHIN 48 HOURS FROM THE TIME OF THE EXPOSURE, (12 HOURS IN THE CASE OF A HEAD OR NECK EXPOSURE), RABIES PROPHYLAXIS SHOULD BEGIN IMMEDIATELY AND CONTINUE FOR THE FULL COURSE UNTIL AND UNLESS THE ANIMAL IS FOUND, TESTED, AND DETERMINED TO BE NEGATIVE FOR RABIES.

D. LOW-RISK ANIMALS (e.g., HAMSTERS, GERBILS, GUINEA PIGS, CHIPMUNKS, SQUIRRELS, RATS, MICE and RABBITS), are rarely found to be infected with rabies. These animals are not known to cause human rabies infections in the United States. Their bites or scratches almost never call for anti-rabies treatment.

❖ Upon validating an exposure, ACHD refers victim(s) to the physician/urgent care/emergency department for the treatment of the wound, tetanus booster (if applicable), and post-exposure rabies prophylaxis.

❖ ACHD is available for consultation 24/7 – Monday – Friday 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM call (412) 578-8062. Evenings, weekends, and holidays please call (412) 687-ACHD (2243).

Specimen Drop-Off

Specimens should be taken to the Public Health Laboratory in Lawrenceville, located at 3901 Penn Avenue, 15224 to Building 8 or Building 1 (schedule below):

Building 8 [Ring Doorbell]

Monday - Friday 8:30 AM to 3:30 PM

Building 1 [Knock to Notify Guard on Duty]

After-Hours Monday - Friday 3:31 PM to 8:29 AM

Saturday and Sunday any time **except** 6:00 AM to 2:00 PM.

Holidays any time (24 hours)