

Rabies Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) Administration:

A Quick Reference for Healthcare Providers



Handling Animal Bites: Locate the Animal and Wait

1. The patient care priorities are wound care, confirmation of tetanus vaccination, and determining if the animal is available to be quarantined or euthanized and tested for rabies.
2. It is safe to allow at least three days from the date of the bite for the animal to be located if it is not already captured. Notify the local animal control agency or equivalent AND the county health department for assistance.
3. If the animal is a dog, cat, or domestic ferret, it can be observed until 10 days after the bite to confirm it was not contagious with rabies when the bite occurred. Farm animals (cow, horse, sheep, etc.) and exotic animals (tiger, bear, etc.) will be observed for 30 days from the bite. The county health department sanitarian will determine if quarantine can occur on the animal owner's property or needs to occur at a veterinarian's clinic.
4. If the biting animal is a skunk, bat, or other wild carnivore, the animal should be submitted to the Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH) Public Health Laboratory for rabies testing.
5. **Rabies PEP is NOT indicated while the animal is in quarantine or rabies testing is pending.**

What	When	How
<p>Rabies Vaccine</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patients who have never received any form of rabies vaccine will receive FOUR doses of the rabies vaccine.* • Persons who have previously received rabies PEP or pre-exposure vaccination should only receive TWO doses. • The dose is 1.0 mL give IM. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The four dose schedule is given on days 0, 3, 7, and 14*. • The two dose schedule (for previously vaccinated patients) is given on days 0 and 3. • Day 0 is the day of the first dose of vaccine, NOT the day of the bite or exposure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The rabies vaccine is given IM in the deltoid muscle of most patients; the anterolateral thigh muscle is an acceptable injection site for very young children. • If the vaccine is given in the gluteal area, it is not considered a valid dose, and the vaccine dose should be repeated as soon as possible, given IM in the deltoid.
<p>Human Rabies Immune Globulin (HRIG)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is a crucial component of the rabies PEP regimen for persons not previously immunized against rabies. • The HRIG dose is 20 IU/kg. • Exception: HRIG is NOT given if the patient has previously received rabies PEP or rabies pre-exposure vaccination. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give HRIG as early as possible, i.e., at same time as Day 0 OR Day 3 vaccine dose. HRIG can be administered up to Day 7. • After Day 7 of the vaccine series, if HRIG was not given, it is no longer indicated because it will suppress the immune response to the rabies vaccine. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infiltrate the area of the bite with as much HRIG as is anatomically feasible, even if the bite is healing. • Inject the remaining HRIG in a different injection site, such as the arm or thigh, on the opposite side of the body from the vaccine dose. • HRIG should not be administered in the same syringe as the vaccine, or at the same site as the vaccine.

* A fifth dose on day 28 is only indicated for immunosuppressed patients.

Administering Rabies PEP

1. If you have a question about whether rabies PEP needs to be initiated, please consult the Epi-on-Call at (405) 271-4060 (24/7/365 availability).
2. If it has been determined that your patient meets criteria for rabies exposure, AND the biting animal tested positive for rabies or is unavailable for capture, quarantine, or testing, follow these important instructions for ensuring appropriate rabies PEP:
 - a. Administer both components of the PEP regimen (unless the patient meets the exception for HRIG).
 - b. Explain the vaccine schedule to the patient—make advance appointments for each dose and give the patient a calendar.
 - c. Inject as much HRIG as possible around the area of the bite; give remaining volume in a site on the opposite side of the body from the vaccine dose, if possible.
 - d. Administer the rabies vaccine in the DELTOID muscle of adults and older children; anterolateral thigh is acceptable for very small children.