Rabies Exposure Guidance for Medical Professionals

Risk Assessment Questions

(Adapted from FloridaHealth.gov)

- Did the bite/scratch break the skin? Bat bites may not be clearly visible.
- What is the animal's risk category? See chart below.
- What is the animal's rabies exposure risk?*
- Is the animal available for observation, capture (if wild or stray), or testing (wildlife)?

Risk Category	Biting Animal	What To Do	
High Risk	Outdoor cats; wild animals: bats, raccoons, foxes, bobcats, skunks, otters	**Initiate post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP)** unless animal can be tested promptly.	
Moderate Risk	Stray dogs, head/neck bites**	PEP may be initiated on case-by-case basis.	
Low Risk	Healthy appearing domestic animals: - Dogs (leash-walked, vaccinated dogs)*† - Cats (strictly indoor, vaccinated cats)* † - Ferrets and rabbits (housed indoors) - Small rodents (rats, squirrels) - Livestock including horses - Non-human primates (vaccinated and healthy appearing)	PEP rarely necessary.	Dogs and cats can be observed for 10 days.
			Livestock can be observed for 14 days.
			Non-human primates can be observed for 14 days. (Veterinary assessment required at start and end of confinement period.)

*Owned *and* unvaccinated (or previously vaccinated) dogs and cats that are routinely supervised when outdoors and with no wildlife exposure have a low risk of being exposed to rabies.
† Nail scratches from healthy appearing dogs or healthy, vaccinated, strictly indoor cats with no contact with outdoor animals do not pose a rabies exposure risk.
**Rabies incubation period can be shorter for head/neck bites, call and report to the county health department immediately.

NOTE: If the biting animal is an owned dog or cat, and it is alive and healthy appearing 10 days following the bite to the human, the rabies exposure risk is eliminated.

Rabies PEP Vaccination Schedule

(Adapted from ACIP and 2014 Florida Rabies Guide)

Product/ Method	Route	Unvaccinated Person	Previously Vaccinated Person	Immunocompromised Person
HRIG‡	Infiltrate Wound	Day 0	None	Day 0
Rabies Vaccine	IM (not gluteal)	Day 0, 3, 7, 14	Day 0, 3	Day 0, 3, 7, 14, 28
Titers	N/A	None	Varies	1-2 weeks post vaccination

‡DOH-SJC does **not** administer human rabies immune globulin (HRIG). Administer HRIG distal to the rabies vaccine injection site.

Patient Discharge Instructions

- Provide discharge documents containing:
  - Rabies vaccine information
  - Dates administered
  - Follow up vaccination schedule
- Patient must call 904-506-6081 within 24-48 hours, ask for the Rabies Program Coordinator.

Submit a Bite Report

Visit stjohns.floridahealth.gov to download the paper bite report **or** submit a bite report online. Fax paper reports to 904-823-2380.

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200 San Sebastian View
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Main: 904-506-6081
https://stjohns.floridahealth.gov

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