

# Rabies



## Post-Exposure Prophylaxis Guide

### Rabies post-exposure prophylaxis, or PEP, is recommended

if a person was bitten by or had a high-risk exposure to:

1. A rabies-positive animal
2. A rabies vector species (bat, raccoon, skunk) that is unavailable for testing

PEP is **NOT** recommended if a person was bitten by a dog or cat that can be observed for 10 days. Contact the local health department to file a bite report or for help with locating/observing domestic animals.

**Consult Tennessee Department of Health if you are unsure if PEP is indicated.**

Rabies PEP is available at emergency departments in Tennessee and is not offered at health departments. Visit the TDH website for a list of facilities that typically have PEP available: <https://www.tn.gov/health/cedep/zoonotic-diseases/rabies.html>. TDH recommends calling ahead to ensure the facility has PEP in stock before visiting.

The standard PEP regimen for non-immunized, immunocompetent persons includes administration of human rabies immune globulin, or HRIG, and the rabies vaccination series:

# 1

## Wound cleansing

- Clean wound(s) immediately with soap and water.
- If possible, thoroughly irrigate with anti-virus agent, like povidone-iodine.
- Provide additional wound care as necessary.

# 2

## HRIG

### Administer 20 IU/kg body weight dose on day 0\*

- Infiltrate HRIG in and around the wound area. Give any remaining HRIG IM in a site distant from the vaccine. If there is no wound (i.e. bat found in sleeping room), administer HRIG in quadriceps or deltoids.
- Do **NOT** inject HRIG and vaccine at the same site or inject HRIG into the gluteus.
- HRIG can be given up to (and including) day 7 in the PEP regimen. If given more than 7 days after rabies vaccine, HRIG can interfere with the immune response.

# 3

## Vaccine

### Administer 1.0 mL dose on days 0, 3, 7 and 14\*\*

- Administer vaccine IM in the deltoid area of adults or anterolateral thigh of young children.
- Do **NOT** inject HRIG and vaccine at the same site or inject vaccine into the gluteus.

\*The first day of the PEP treatment regimen is designated as day 0.

\*\*Vaccination schedule deviations of a few days are not a great concern and the patient should resume the series. Titers may be drawn to evaluate immune response. Consult TDH if there are significant schedule deviations.

## Special Considerations



**Immunocompromised** persons receive a fifth vaccination on day 28 and should be tested for seroconversion 7 to 14 days following completion of PEP.



**Children** can be given vaccine in the anterolateral thigh and should receive the same weight-based dose of HRIG as adults (20 IU/kg).



**Pregnant women** can follow the standard PEP regimen.



**Previously vaccinated** persons who have received a complete regimen of either pre- or post-exposure rabies prophylaxis receive only two rabies vaccine boosters on days 0 and 3 and **SHOULD NOT** receive HRIG.



**Uninsured or underinsured** persons may be eligible for patient assistance programs that provide rabies vaccine and immune globulin at reduced or zero cost. Learn more here: [www.cdc.gov/rabies/medical\\_care/programs.html](http://www.cdc.gov/rabies/medical_care/programs.html)

