

## GUIDE TO RABIES POST-EXPOSURE EVALUATION AND MANAGEMENT

Animal type	Evaluation and Disposition of Animal	Post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) recommendation
Dogs, cats, ferrets, cattle, horses and sheep	<b>Healthy</b> and available for 10 day observation, <b>quarantine</b> regardless of vaccination status <sup>1</sup>	Should not begin PEP unless animal develops rabies
	Rabid	Immediate PEP
	Suspected Rabid Available for testing	Await testing results; begin PEP immediately if the animal is positive for rabies.
	Unavailable for testing	Immediate PEP
	Unknown (escaped)	Immediate PEP
Skunks, raccoons, bats, <sup>2</sup> foxes, and most other carnivores, including dog/wolf hybrids <sup>3</sup> ; woodchucks and livestock for which there is NO USDA- approved rabies vaccine	Regard as rabid until animal proven negative by laboratory tests. <sup>4</sup> (Animal available for testing.)	Await testing results; begin PEP immediately if the animal is positive for rabies.
	Animal unavailable for testing	Immediate PEP
Rodents (except woodchucks), and lagomorphs (rabbits and hares) and other small mammals except bats	Consider individually <sup>5</sup>	Bites of squirrels, hamsters, guinea pigs, gerbils, chipmunks, rats, mice, other small rodents, rabbits, and hares almost never require PEP. However, testing and/or PEP is indicated in some circumstances.

### Footnotes

1. If a dog, cat, ferret, cattle, horse or sheep being held for the 10-day quarantine develops signs of rabies or signs of any illness, it should be euthanized and tested immediately. If the results are positive, the exposed person should begin PEP immediately.
2. It may be difficult to recognize that an exposure to a bat has occurred since the size of bites or scratches by bats may be very small. Therefore, bat bites may go unnoticed or be mistaken for an insect bite or sting. Post-exposure treatment should be given in any situation where a bat is physically present and a bite, or any other exposure/contact, cannot be ruled out. When children are involved, and/or there are no witnesses to rule out a potential exposure, this is particularly important.
3. Dog/wolf hybrids, regardless of vaccination history, should be considered as wild, unvaccinated animals.
4. The animal should be humanely killed and tested as soon as possible. Holding for observation is not recommended. Do not give post-exposure prophylaxis if immunofluorescence test results of the animal are negative.
5. Rodents (except woodchucks), lagomorphs (rabbits, hare), and other small mammals except bats:
  - Small mammals caged outdoors: Outdoor cages may allow exposure to rabid animals, and several rabies cases have been reported from animals caged in this manner. If the animal is not available for testing, post-exposure prophylaxis is recommended.
  - Small mammals caged indoors: Healthy hamsters, gerbils, rats, mice, and rabbits, etc. which have been caged exclusively indoors for the past 6 months and which have no history of receiving a modified live rabies vaccine, pose no risk. Treatment would not be recommended for the exposed person.
  - Wild rodents, lagomorphs and other small mammals except bats: These animals are unlikely to have rabies. Each exposure needs to be evaluated as outlined below.
    - Provoked bite: If the bite was provoked (such as through feeding, petting, or playing with the animal) and the animal appeared healthy, it is unlikely that the animal was rabid at the time of the bite and most experts would not recommend post-exposure prophylaxis.
    - Unprovoked bite or unhealthy animal: If the bite was unprovoked or the animal appeared unhealthy, it should be submitted to the Utah Public Health Laboratory for testing. If the animal is unavailable for testing, PEP should be considered.

**NOTE:** Birds, reptiles, amphibians, and fish do not get rabies.

(Adapted from: CDC, MMWR. January 8, 1999 / Vol. 48 / No. RR-1. and Massachusetts Department of Public Health.)