Rabies Post-Exposure Guidance

Use this flow chart to determine whether rabies post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) is indicated for an individual with an animal exposure. *It is the duty of the provider to initiate rabies PEP upon initial visit if deemed necessary by this chart.*

Use the box at bottom left for rabies PEP dosing information.

Has exposure to an animal occurred?*

*Animal exposures can be defined as the following:
1) Bite Exposure – a penetration of the skin by the teeth.
2) Non-Bite Exposure – contamination of broken skin or mucous membranes with animal's saliva.
3) Unknown Exposure – a situation where the individual's exposure cannot be determined.

NO → Rabies PEP not indicated.

YES → What is the nature of the exposure?

Exposed to a raccoon, otter, fox, coyote, bat, bobcat, or skunk.

Is the animal available for testing?

YES → RABIES PEP INDICATED

NO → Exposed to a cat, dog, or ferret.

Is the animal available for observation or quarantine?

NO → Exposed to livestock.

Livestock exposures should be evaluated on an individual basis.

Contact FDOH-Pinellas:
727-824-6932

YES → Exposed to any other mammal or primate.

Most other mammals and primates are low-risk animals.
Initiation of PEP upon initial visit is not indicated.
Consult FDOH-Pinellas
727-824-6932

Initiation of PEP upon initial visit is not indicated. The one exception to this is if the exposure is to the head or neck region. If this is the case, rabies PEP should be initiated and then discontinued if the animal tests negative. Instruct the victim to follow-up with Animal Services for testing immediately.

Initiation of rabies PEP upon initial visit is not indicated. However, consider the following factors on a case by case basis:

1) Was the exposure unprovoked? An unprovoked exposure is one that takes place for no apparent reason. An exposure while feeding is considered provoked.
2) Was the animal ill or rabid-acting? If known, past behavior should be taken into consideration.
3) Is the animal a stray or not maintained a pet? Animals housed or living outside have a higher potential for being infected.
4) Is the animal unvaccinated or is the vaccination status of the animal unknown?

If one or more of these factors applies, discuss with the victim the options of testing the animal OR initiation of PEP before the end of quarantine.

ADMINISTERING RABBIES PEP

Treatment for unvaccinated individuals:
• One-time dose of Human Rabies Immune Globulin (HRIG) at 20 IU/kg body weight (9 IU/lb) on day 0. If anatomically feasible, the full dose of HRIG should be infiltrated in the area around and into the wound(s). Any remaining volume should be administered IM at an anatomical site distant from vaccine administration. HRIG should never be given in the gluteal muscle/area due to questionable Immune response. (The only exception is if the exposure site is in the gluteal muscle/area).
• 1.0 mL rabies vaccine IM in the deltoid area on days 0, 3, 7, and 14.
• Immunosuppressed individuals should receive a fifth dose of vaccine on day 28 and have follow-up testing for RFFIT rabies neutralizing antibody within one to two weeks after the fifth vaccination.

Treatment for previously vaccinated individuals:
• HRIG should not be administered to individuals previously vaccinated after 1980.
• 1.0 mL rabies vaccine IM in the deltoid area on days 0 and 3.

PLEASE NOTE: HRIG and Rabies vaccine should never be administered in the gluteal area due to reduced production of antibody. Pregnancy is not a contraindication for receiving rabies PEP.

For any questions regarding the administration of HRIG or PEP please contact your local Health Department.

ALL animal exposures must be reported by fax to:
Pinellas County Animal Services
Fax: 727-582-2635
AND
Florida Department of Health in Pinellas County
Fax: 727-484-3865

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