

Rabies General Information

What is rabies?

Rabies is a disease that affects the brain and spinal cord. It is caused by a virus that lives in the saliva (spit) of infected animals. If it is not treated, rabies is 100% fatal.

How do people get rabies?

- You can get rabies when the virus in an infected animal's spit enters your bloodstream. This happens when an infected animal bites or scratches you, or licks a cut or wound. You can also get rabies when spit from an infected animal comes in contact with the lining of your mouth, nose or eyes.
- Animals that can carry rabies are bats, skunks, foxes, coyotes and raccoons. Cats and dogs that have not had rabies needles can also carry and spread rabies.

How can I tell if an animal has rabies?

It may be difficult to tell if an animal has rabies. Any animal that bites a person should be captured and watched for signs of the disease. When an animal has rabies it is called "rabid".

What should I do if someone is bitten by an animal?

Immediate first aid after a bite:

- Wash the bite area thoroughly with soap and water for at least 15 minutes.
- Flush the wound area again and again with water.
- Apply an antiseptic or alcohol to the area.

See a healthcare provider as soon as possible.

- **The healthcare provider should not stitch the wound.**
- There are effective vaccines that healthcare providers can use to protect people from the disease.

How can I prevent rabies?

To help prevent rabies:

- Get immunized against rabies if you are in a high-risk group. These include:
 - veterinarians
 - lab workers
 - animal control workers
 - wildlife workers
 - conservationists

- persons hunting and trapping in high-risk areas
- cave explorers
- people traveling to areas where rabies is common
- Register, license and vaccinate all domestic animals such as dogs and cats.
- Be aware of the signs and symptoms of rabies if you have pets.
- Be aware of the dangers of picking up sick or hurt animals or trying to tame wild animals.
- Do not move wild animals to other areas of the province or to other provinces.
- Do not feed wild animals or leave leftover food around yards, parks, or other places. This may attract wild animals.
- Seal small holes and entryways in any place where bats could enter and come in contact with people, pets or farm animals. This includes homes, cottages, sheds, and barns.
- Vaccinate farm animals and livestock.