Rabies Exposure Assessment Algorithm

Person was exposed\(^1\) to a domestic dog, cat or ferret

Has the animal been captured? (May consider delay initiating PEP up to 10 days from exposure in order to capture animal unless unusual circumstances exist\(^2\).)

- **No**
  - Administer vaccine and RIG according to ACIP recommendations.

- **Yes**
  - Options
    - Quarantine animal, whether vaccinated or not, for 10 days after exposure. PEP is usually not recommended at this time\(^2\). Veterinary exam to be conducted at day one and day 10 to assess the health status of animal. During quarantine, did animal show signs of rabies\(^3\) or die within the 10 days?
      - **No**
        - PEP is not indicated
      - **Yes**
        - Test animal for rabies\(^7\). (PEP may be delayed up to 3 days post-exposure, pending test results unless unusual circumstances exist\(^7\).) Is test positive?
          - **No**
            - PEP is not indicated
          - **Yes**
            - PEP is indicated

  - Euthanize and submit for testing\(^2\). (PEP may be delayed up to 10 days post-exposure, pending test results unless unusual circumstances exist\(^2\).) Is test positive?
    - **No**
      - PEP is not indicated
    - **Yes**
      - Test animal for rabies\(^7\). (PEP may be delayed up to 3 days post-exposure, pending test results unless unusual circumstances exist\(^7\).) Is test positive?
        - **No**
          - PEP is not indicated
        - **Yes**
          - PEP is indicated

Person was exposed\(^1\) to a domestic animal such as cow, horse, sheep, pig, elk or bison

Does the animal exhibit signs of rabies\(^3\) or did it die suddenly?

- **No**
  - Contact Division of Disease Control\(^6\).

- **Yes**
  - Euthanize and submit for testing\(^2\). (PEP may be delayed up to 10 days post-exposure, pending test results unless unusual circumstances exist\(^2\).) Is test positive?
    - **No**
      - PEP is not indicated
    - **Yes**
      - Test animal for rabies\(^7\). (PEP may be delayed up to 3 days post-exposure, pending test results unless unusual circumstances exist\(^7\).) Is test positive?
        - **No**
          - PEP is not indicated
        - **Yes**
          - PEP is indicated

Person was exposed\(^1\) to a free ranging wild animal such as a skunk, fox, coyote, raccoon or bat\(^5\)

Has the animal been captured?

- **No**
  - Administer vaccine and RIG according to ACIP recommendations.

- **Yes**
  - Test animal for rabies\(^7\). (PEP may be delayed up to 3 days post-exposure, pending test results unless unusual circumstances exist\(^7\).) Is test positive?
    - **No**
      - PEP is not indicated
    - **Yes**
      - PEP is indicated

Person was exposed\(^1\) to other wild animal kept in a zoo, pet store, exhibit or under the control of a private individual

PEP not recommended. If unusual circumstances exist, contact Division of Disease Control for guidance\(^6\).

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1. Exposure: Defined as a bite that broke the skin, or saliva contact to an open cut, sore or wound or to mucous membrane (mouth, nose, eye). If no exposure exists, PEP is not needed.
2. If the animal exhibited any signs or symptoms of rabies (see 3), if the attack was vicious or unprovoked or the bite(s) occurred in the head and neck region, consideration should be given to starting post-exposure prophylaxis immediately.
3. Signs of rabies may include any one of the following: excitability, vicious attacks, biting, agitation, restlessness, aggressiveness, lack of fear, excessive salivation, aversion to water, inability to swallow or drink, muscular dysfunction, coordination or gait irregularities, paralysis, convulsions, avoidance of contact with humans or other animals, lethargy and loss of appetite.
4. Small rodents include squirrels, hamsters, mice, rats, gerbils, chipmunks, moles and voles.
5. Bats pose particular risks and rabies transmission has occurred in the absence of a recognized bite. Every effort should be made to capture and test the bat involved in any exposure incident. If the patient can provide adequate history that no direct exposure occurred, then no treatment is necessary. If the patient is an unobserved child, a person who was asleep, intoxicated or mentally disabled, then post-exposure prophylaxis may be indicated, especially if the status of the bat cannot be ascertained through lab testing.
6. For rabies exposure consultation, contact the Division of Disease Control at 800.472.218 or 701.328.2378.
7. For testing, contact the Division of Laboratory Services at 701.328.6272 or NDSU Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory at 701.231.8307.

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