



[durham.ca/hcp](http://durham.ca/hcp)

# FAX about ...



## May is Rabies Awareness Month

Rabies awareness month is May; the Durham Region Health Department (DRHD) is reminding **health care providers** of their **requirement** under **Ontario Regulation 567** to **notify their local public health unit** of any **person** who has had a **suspected rabies exposure**. This notification should occur as soon as possible. In 2017, DRHD investigated over **1,200** animal bite reports and issued over **120** rabies post-exposure treatments.

Only mammals can carry rabies. In Canada, the animals most often proven rabid are wild terrestrial carnivores (e.g., **skunks, foxes and raccoons**), **bats, cattle and stray dogs and cats**. Rabies is transmitted to a human when the virus is introduced into a bite wound, open cuts in skin or onto mucous membranes such as the mouth or eyes which warrants rabies **post-exposure prophylaxis** (PEP). The objective of PEP is to neutralize the rabies virus at the site of infection before the virus can enter the central nervous system; hence PEP should be **started as soon as possible** after the exposure and in accordance with the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care "**Guidance Document for the Management of Suspected Rabies Exposures**" (September 2013).

PEP of previously **unimmunized** persons consists of administration of **both Rabies Immune Globulin (Rablg)** and **rabies vaccine**.

a) The **Rablg** recommended **dose** is based upon the **body weight** of the person and the **entire dose** should be **administered** on the first day of initiation of therapy, **Day 0**. If possible, the **full dose of Rablg** should be thoroughly infiltrated into the wound(s) and surrounding area(s).

b) The **rabies vaccine** should be **administered** IM at a **different anatomical site from where the Rablg** was administered on **Day 0**, and a **separate syringe** should be **used**. In general, the rabies vaccine is administered into the deltoid muscle in older children and adults but never in the gluteal region. The rabies vaccine for an **immunocompetent** person consists of **four 1.0 mL doses** of HDCV or PCECV, and a single dose should be **administered on Days 0, 3, 7 and 14**. Please see references for more information on infants, schedule & dosing for immunocompromised persons and previously immunized individuals.

**Health care providers are to report animal bites and, where recommended, to order PEP for their patients, by contacting DRHD at 1-888-777-9613.** Reports can also be **submitted electronically** by visiting [durham.ca](http://durham.ca) – **Health and Wellness – Public Health Inspections and Investigations – Rabies.**

Durham Region Health Department: 905-723-3818, 1-888-777 9613

May 14, 2018

If you prefer to receive this information in an electronic format please submit your request to [healthresources@durham.ca](mailto:healthresources@durham.ca)

If you require this information in an accessible format, contact 1-888-777-9613.