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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 557 of the Health Protection and Promotion Act** 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 2018, 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 "**Management of Potential Rabies Exposures Guideline, 2019**" (**February 2019**).

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

- a) The **Rablg** recommended dose is **20 IU/kg** 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** distant 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 – Health and Wellness – Public Health Inspections and Investigations – Rabies**.

Health care provider resources now available to order online durham.ca/HCP.

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

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If you prefer to receive this information in an electronic format please submit your request to healthresources@durham.ca

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