



FAX about...



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Rabies Products Shortages

The Ministry of Health has notified public health units (PHUs) that due to a higher demand over the past month, the provincial supplies of **rabies vaccine and immunoglobulin** for post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) at the Ontario Government Pharmaceutical and Medical Supply Services **may stock-out** before they can be replenished by the manufacturers. At this time, it is anticipated that the current provincial supply **will not be replenished before November 2019**.

The Ministry has requested the following from PHUs as well as health care providers (HCPs):

- Ensure that **thorough risk assessments** are conducted for all reported exposures as well as requests for rabies biologicals submitted by HCPs
- Ensure that **risk assessment outcomes** and **recommendations for PEP** are **clearly communicated** to HCPs to support appropriate and judicious use of rabies biologicals
- **Minimize wastage** of rabies vaccine and rabies immunoglobulin by ensuring that **cold chain requirements are followed**.

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 Ministry's "**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 [Report an Animal Bite Online](#).

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.