



Durham Region Health Department FAX about...

For Health Care Professionals



Human Rabies: Requirement to Report

May is Ontario's Rabies Awareness Month. In 2024 Durham Region Health Department (DRHD) conducted over 1580 rabies investigations, 65% canine and 21% feline related bites/scratches. Fifty-eight animals were submitted for rabies testing with 4 results being positive for bats.

Under the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*, Ontario Regulation 557 section 2(1) states:

A physician, registered nurse in the extended class, **veterinarian**, police officer or any other person who has information concerning **either or both of the following** shall, as soon as possible, notify the Medical Officer of Health and provide the Medical Officer of Health with the information, including the name and contact information of the exposed person, for:

- Any bite from a mammal
- Any contact with a mammal that is conducive to the potential transmission of rabies to persons.

To report a potential human exposure with a bat, wild life, **domestic animal** or livestock please complete the [Animal Bite/ Exposure Form](#) (durham.ca/hcp, under forms, reporting) and fax it to the confidential line at 905-666-1887.

Rabies vaccination of cats, dogs, and ferrets

Under the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*, Ontario Regulation 567/90 states, "Every owner or person having the care or custody of a cat, dog or ferret three months of age or over shall ensure that the cat, dog or ferret is immunized against rabies."

Before booking appointments for rabies vaccine, it is important to determine whether the animal is under a risk-assessed confinement order or observational period by DRHD. If a domestic cat, dog, or ferret bites or scratches a person, the animal is typically confined at the owner's home for a 10-day period. For livestock (such as horses, cows, bulls, steers, calves, or sheep), the confinement period is 14 days. During this time, the Ministry of Health recommends against vaccinating the animal for rabies. This is to ensure that if rabies symptoms appear, there is no confusion between symptoms of the rabies virus and potential reactions to the vaccine.

Vaccination appointments must be scheduled after confinement orders or observation periods.

To speak with a public health inspector, please call Durham Health Connection Line at 905-668-2020 or 1-800-841-2729. After regular business hours (between 4:30 pm and 8:30 am), during weekends and holidays please call 1-800-372-1104 or 905-576-9991. For more information on rabies, please visit durham.ca/rabies.

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905-668-2020 or 1-800-841-2729 | durham.ca/health

If you require this information in an accessible format, contact 1-800-841-2729.

