



Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) against Rabies

FACT SHEET 13-023-0317

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Background

Causative Agent	N/A
Travel Risks	N/A
Clinical Description	Rabies is a zoonotic disease caused by RNA viruses in the family <i>Rhabdoviridae</i> , genus <i>Lyssavirus</i> . Rabies virus is present in the saliva and central nervous system (CNS) tissue of rabid mammals. If a person has been exposed (or reasonably presumed to have been exposed) to a rabid (or potentially rabid) animal, then rabies post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) is warranted for the prevention of human rabies. PEP can be in the form of anti-rabies vaccine, human rabies immunoglobulin (HRIG) or both depending on the circumstances.

Case Classification

Confirmed: A case that meets the exposure criteria* as defined below in which rabies PEP is initiated and a full rabies exposure risk assessment is completed

Critical Reporting Elements

Specify the implicated animal species if known.

Anatomical site of exposure.

Document the circumstances under which the case patient was potentially exposed including deployment and duty exposure, occupational activities, environmental exposures, or other high risk activities.

Note the patient's rabies immunization history.

Specify reason(s) for discontinuation if PEP was discontinued.

Comments

Do not report cases where PEP is initiated but is subsequently deemed unnecessary once a full rabies exposure risk assessment identifies that exposure criteria were not met.

Report all cases receiving PEP that met the exposure criteria even if PEP is subsequently terminated due to the animal being deemed rabies free.

*Exposure is defined as one or more of the following:

- Any bite, scratch or other situation in which saliva or CNS tissue of a rabid or potentially rabid animal could have entered an open or fresh wound or come in contact with a mucous membrane by entering the eye, mouth or nose or
- Inadvertent bat contact or circumstances in which bat contact cannot be ruled out (ex: finding a bat in a room with an unattended child, a mentally impaired person, or a sleeping person) or
- Recipient of organ donations from suspected or known human cases of rabies.