

## **Animal Bites (Potential Rabies Exposure in Humans)**

One of the most effective ways to prevent rabies infection is immediate thorough cleansing of the animal bite or scratch wounds with liberal amounts of soap and water for 10-15 minutes.

It is important for bite victims to notify their local health department or local law enforcement whenever a bite occurs to ensure that the biting animal is appropriately and legally observed or tested for rabies. It is also vital not to release or destroy a biting animal until a public health official or an animal control officer is consulted. The victim's physician should also be notified promptly.

In most instances, observation or testing of the biting animal will rule out the possibility of rabies and will therefore eliminate any need for the bite victim to undergo the series of injections. If circumstances of the exposure warrant it, however, a physician will administer preventive medications (called post-exposure prophylaxis) to the bite victim. This preventive treatment consists of an injection of rabies immune globulin immediately, and four doses of the rabies vaccine given over the course of 14 days. The vaccine is injected in the arm, similar to a tetanus shot. Click here for details on the [preventive post-exposure regimen](#).

Exposures to bats are worrisome because some people with very minor exposures to bats have contracted rabies. If there has been any possibility of physical contact with a bat, even without a known bite, the animal should be safely captured and held until a public health official or a physician can be consulted.

It should be noted that domestic animals which are exposed to rabies constitute a very real threat to their human owners, particularly if the animal is unvaccinated.

### **Prevention Measures**

Exposure to rabies may be minimized by the following measures:

- Eliminate stray dogs and cats and enforce leash laws.
- Vaccinate pet dogs, cats, ferrets, and livestock against rabies.
- Stay away from all wild animals, especially those acting abnormally.
- Teach your children not to approach any unfamiliar animals.
- Do not keep exotic or wild animals as pets, regardless of how young or cute they are.
- Exclude bats from living quarters by keeping screens in good repair and by closing any small openings that could allow them to enter.
- Persons traveling to developing countries in which rabies is highly prevalent, or persons who are at ongoing risk of possible rabies exposure (e.g., veterinarians, animal control officers) should ask their doctor about receiving the PRE-exposure rabies vaccinations.

### **WI Statutes-Rabies Control**

[http://folio.legis.state.wi.us/cgi-bin/om\\_isapi.dll?infobase=stats.nfo&jump=95.21](http://folio.legis.state.wi.us/cgi-bin/om_isapi.dll?infobase=stats.nfo&jump=95.21)

### **City of De Pere Ordinance Chapter 86**

**Sec. 86-2. Rabies control.** 

(a)

The provisions of Wis. Stats § 95.21, as may be amended from time to time, together with any administrative rules promulgated and adopted in accordance therewith, are hereby adopted and incorporated by reference into this Code for the purpose of rabies control.

(b)

*Vaccination of dog or cats required.*

(1)

The owner of a dog or cat shall have the animal vaccinated by a licensed veterinarian on or before the date the animal reaches five months of age.

(2)

An owner who imports an animal into the city that has reached five months of age must have the animal vaccinated by a licensed veterinarian as evidenced by a current certificate of rabies vaccination from this state or another state before locating within the city limits.

(3)

The owner of a dog or cat shall have the animal vaccinated:

a.

Within one year after initial vaccination; or

b.

Before the date that the immunization expires, as stated on the vaccination certificate; or

c.

Within one year after the previous vaccination, if no date is specified on the certificate.

(c)

*Animals suspected of biting people.*

(1)

All incidents occurring in the city in which any animal bites or scratches a person or other animal or is suspected of such, shall immediately be reported to the city health department or to the police department by any person having knowledge of such incident.

(2)

The provisions of Wis. Stats. § 95.21 shall be followed.

(3)

If an animal which has been quarantined in accordance with this section dies during the quarantine period, the person having custody of the animal shall immediately notify the city health officer or designee and shall not destroy or dispose of the dead animal until all specimens as directed by the health

officer have been obtained and permission by the health officer is given to dispose of the dead animal.

*(Ord. No. 08-17, § 1, 9-2-2008)*