

SMDHU— UPDATED Rabies and Animal Exposure Reporting Requirements

Attention: Physicians, Family Health Teams, Nurse Practitioners, Emergency Departments, Urgent Care/Walk-in Clinics

Date: May 4, 2018

The reporting to public health units of animal exposures that could result in the transmission of rabies to people has been a longstanding requirement of the Health Protection and Promotion Act (HPPA). This requirement has remained in place with recent regulatory revision of the HPPA, with the following taking effect on January 1, 2018, in O. Reg 557 Section 2(1):

*A physician ... 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:*

- 1. **Any bite from a mammal.***
- 2. **Any contact with a mammal that is conducive to the potential transmission of rabies to persons.***
O. Reg. 501/17, s. 1.

So far this year, SMDHU has not had any positive rabies tests in animals, however, terrestrial rabies (fox strain and raccoon strain) is present in the Niagara and Hamilton area, and we have had positive rabies tests in bats in Simcoe Muskoka in recent years. Although with rabies vaccine bating the Ministry of Natural Resources has managed to reduce the number of animal cases of raccoon-strain rabies in that area, translocation to our area is possible, and there has been no wild-animal vaccination elsewhere in the province for the past two years. Thus all bites and scratches from all mammals should be managed as possible rabies exposures, and should be reported to SMDHU for further investigation.

Prompt reporting of animal bites to public health ensures a prompt public health risk assessment and investigation resulting in optimal patient care and often a reduced need for rabies post-exposure prophylaxis. SMDHU investigates over 1,000 reported animal bites every year; however through our investigation only approximately 100 people have needed to complete rabies post-exposure prophylaxis series annually. SMDHU is a resource for physicians to assist in rabies exposure assessment, providing information and resources on our [Primary Care Portal](#) as well as telephone consultation with our Rabies Program Coordinator.

What should health care practitioners do when a patient presents with a bat, wildlife or domestic animal exposure?

1. Please fill out the **Rabies and Animal Exposure Incident Report Form** to assist with the collection of required reporting information. All reported incidents will be investigated by a Public Health Inspector (PHI). All animal exposure incidents may be reported by faxing a copy of the completed *Rabies and Animal Exposure Incident Report Form* (page 3 of this document) through our **Designated Rabies Fax line** at 705-725-8132.



Note: **Facial, neck or head bites from mammals** are higher risk for transmission (potentially with a shorter incubation period) and **direct contact with bats** is also high risk. Such incidents should also be verbally reported at **705-721-7520** or **1-877-721-7520** ext. **8811** (Monday – Friday 8:30am – 4:30pm) or after hours at **1-888-225-7851** (evenings, weekends or holidays).

2. In instances where there is a bat exposure, please ask the client if they have the bat available for testing. If so, please provide information about the status and location of the bat in question when reporting to the health unit. If possible, bats should be safely captured (or retrieved if dead) and tested for rabies when there has been a human exposure. Such testing can help to avoid or reduce rabies vaccination for exposed patients. Extreme care should always be taken to ensure that there is no further exposure when captured or handled. In the event that a bat is captured, it should be submitted for rabies testing; SMDHU staff are available to facilitate such testing.

Unless exposure from a bat is to the head or neck region, rabies vaccine and immunoglobulin administration can be delayed for up to 48 hours until the rabies test result on the bat is obtained. If vaccination is initiated, it can be discontinued if the bat test is later found to be negative for rabies. Results are usually available within 48 hours, however, result times can occasionally take longer because of collection schedules, courier limitations and delays on weekends.

3. When determining the need for post exposure rabies immunization the current [Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care \(MOHLTC\) Guidance Document for the Management of Suspected Rabies Exposures](#) is recommended as a resource. For **rabies vaccine and immunoglobulin**, please contact the Rabies Coordinator at ext. **8894** or after hours at **1-888-225-7851**.

The following **rabies related resources** for Health Professionals are found under the Environmental Health tab of the Health Unit's website -

<http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org/JFY/HPPortal/PCPCategories/EnvironmentalHealth.aspx>

- [Rabies PEP Dose Schedule](#) (dose and schedule of vaccine and immune globulin)
- [Recommendations for Administration of Rabies PEP](#) (administration of the Rabies Vaccine and Immunoglobulin, such as needle size and injection location)
- [Guidance Document for the Management of Suspected Rabies Exposures](#)
- [Canadian Immunization Guide](#)
- [Rabies and Animal Exposure Incident Report](#)

Please contact the Environmental Health - Health Connection line at 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520 ext. 8811 with any questions on the information provided in this notice, whereas **requests for rabies vaccination** may be directed to the Rabies Coordinator at ext. 8894.

IMMEDIATELY FAX all animal exposure incidents to the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit:

FAX: 705-725-8132

For **suspicious animal exposures, and head, face, neck exposures**: Phone: (705) or (877) 721-7520 ext. 8811

For the physician inquiries and release of rabies post-exposure prophylaxis: Phone: (705) or (877) 721-7520 ext. 8894

AFTER HOURS, WEEKENDS AND HOLIDAYS: 1-888-225-7851

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

A REPORT/INTAKE

Date Reported to SMDHU: YYYY/MMM/DD Reporting Location (Name of Hospital/Office/Police): _____
 Contact Person and phone number at Reporting Location for additional file information: _____ Ext: _____

B PATIENT/VICTIM INFORMATION

Name: _____ Legal Sex Male Female X
As found on health card

Parent Guardian Name (if patient is under 16yrs of age): _____

Date of Birth: YYYY/MMM/DD Phone: _____ (Other) _____

Permanent Address: _____
911# _____ Street Name _____

Temporary Address: _____
911# _____ Street Name _____ City _____ Dates Effective: _____

C INCIDENT DETAILS

Date of Incident: YYYY/MMM/DD

Details of Incident: _____

Body area affected: _____ Bite Scratch Saliva Handling Other : _____

Skin broken: Yes No

Family Physician: _____ Phone or other contact info: _____

D ANIMAL OWNER INFORMATION (or person with custody of animal):

Owner: _____ Phone: _____ (Other) _____

Address of Owner: _____
911# _____ Street Name _____

Current Location of Animal: Same as Owner: Other : _____
911# _____ Street Name _____

Animal Species: Dog Cat Bat Other : _____

Breed and Full Description: _____

Domestic Animals must be kept alive and available for Health Unit surveillance for 10 days to rule out risk of rabies.
 Do **NOT** euthanize animal involved unless authorized by Health Unit Public Health Inspector.
 The Health Unit does not remove domestic animal from their owners.