

Rabies Vaccination Information

Rabies Virus

Rabies is a viral infection that is transmitted when saliva, tissue, or nasal discharges from a rabid animal is introduced into the human body by a bite, scratch, or through exposure to the mucous membranes. The rabies infection is a fatal acute viral encephalomyelitis that is characterized by headache, fever, and sensory changes that progress into paralysis, delirium, convulsions, and death. There is no known effective treatment. The fatality rate of infected individuals is 100%.

Disease Exposure

Most exposures are an “animal bite exposure”. An animal bite exposure is defined as having one’s skin pierced or abraded by animal teeth or claws. Other exposures may occur through “non-bite” mechanisms. A non-bite exposure is defined as having abraded skin, open wounds, eyes, and mucous membranes contaminated with animal saliva or other potentially infectious materials, i.e., neural tissue. This could result from direct contact with the material or from accidents involving sharps (needles, broken glass). In addition, aerosol exposures in laboratories and in caves with high numbers of bats are included in the non-bite exposure potential.

Rabies series immunizations

Woodlands will always recommend pre-exposure rabies vaccination. This is not a routine vaccination. Contact your doctor for vaccine information. Pre-exposure rabies vaccine is a series of 3 given over about 3 weeks time. For volunteers who have already received their pre-exposure vaccination, a titer should be drawn every 2 years. If an animal bite or non-bite exposure occurs after the pre-series is complete, two additional intramuscular rabies immunizations are the administered treatment. If a bite exposure or non-bite exposure occurs without the pre-series, one rabies immune globulin and five intramuscular immunizations are necessary. Actions following a non-bite exposure will be determined by the victim’s physician and/or local health department.

This information about rabies and rabies vector species comes from the Center for Disease Control’s website. Additional information can be found at : <http://www.cdc.gov/rabies/>

Rabies Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis

Pre-exposure vaccination is particularly important for persons at high risk for being exposed to the rabies virus. Pre-exposure vaccination does not eliminate the need for additional medical evaluation after a rabies exposure, but it simplifies management of additional doses of vaccine needed. Pre-exposure prophylaxis might offer partial immunity to persons whose post exposure prophylaxis is delayed. Pre-exposure prophylaxis might provide some protection to persons at risk for unrecognized exposures to rabies. Pre-exposure vaccination should be offered to persons in high-risk groups, such as veterinarians and their staff, animal handlers, rabies researchers, and certain laboratory workers. Pre-exposure vaccination also should be considered for persons whose activities bring them into frequent contact with rabies virus or potentially rabid bats, raccoons, skunks, cats, dogs, or other species at risk for having rabies.

Post Exposure Vaccination

Post exposure anti rabies vaccination should always include administration of both passive antibody and vaccine, with the exception of persons who have ever previously received complete vaccination regimens (pre-exposure or post exposure). If post exposure prophylaxis has been initiated and appropriate laboratory diagnostic testing (i.e., the direct fluorescent antibody test) indicates that the exposing animal was not rabid, post exposure prophylaxis can be discontinued.

TITER TESTING

The RRFIT (pronounced “riffit”) test is the only reliable rabies titer test. Serum specimens may be sent to one of the following laboratories:

The following information concerning the titer test is provided for your primary caregiver. This information about rabies laboratories can be found at

<https://www.avma.org/KB/Resources/Reference/Pages/Rabies-pre-exposure-vaccination-titers-veterinarians.aspx>

Rabies Laboratory
Kansas State University
2005 Research Park Circle
Manhattan, KS 66502
Phone: 785-532-4483
Fax: 785-532-4474
Fax: 785-532-4522
rabies@vet.k-state.edu

The cost is \$47-\$71 (2019). Sample and fees to be sent to the laboratory. Forms and shipping instructions are available on the web at <http://www.ksvdl.org/rabies-laboratory/rffit-test/index.html>

Atlanta Health Associates, Inc.
309 Pirkle Ferry Road, Suite D300
Cumming, GA 30040
Phone: 770-205-9091
Phone: 800-717-5612
Fax: (770) 205-9021

info@atlantahealth.net

The cost is \$45-\$70 (2019). Sample and fees to be sent to the laboratory. Forms and shipping instructions are available on the web at <http://atlantahealth.net/rffit/>