Rabies
How to assess animal bites OR concerns about rabies exposure

Step 1. Treat wound and administer tetanus vaccination, if required.¹


- Was patient exposed to mammal’s saliva or central nervous system material via:
  - bite through skin?
  - mucus membranes?
  - non-intact skin?
- Did a bat land on or touch the patient?

If answer is YES to any one of these, go to Step 3.²
If answer is NO to both scenarios, no further action required.

Exposure to a mammal’s blood, urine, feces, or a skunk’s spray does not pose a risk of exposure to rabies.

Step 3. Assess action required.

- **Pet**
  - Dog, cat, or ferret

  Animal well and behaving normally
  Advise the patient to ensure the pet is observed for 10 days if the animal is not available for observation (e.g., unknown owner), follow the steps under “Other mammal”

  Animal ill or behaving abnormally
  Advise patient
  - that the pet must be assessed by a veterinarian and
  - to call Public Health Services

- **Small rodents**
  - Rat, rabbit, hamster, mouse, etc.

  Animal ill or behaving abnormally during 10-day period
  Veterinarian will contact Public Health Services immediately if rabies is suspected.
  - Public Health Services will consult with Canadian Food Inspection Agency vets about the testing of an animal.
  - Public Health Services will arrange for patient to get rabies vaccine and rabies immune globulin, if needed.

- **Other mammal**
  - Bat, direct contact only
  - Wild animal
  - Farm animal
  - Other mammal
  - Pet (unavailable or owner unknown)

  Risk very low; not known to transmit rabies to humans in North America.

  No action required.

  Call Public Health Services promptly.

- **Bat**
  - Advise patient to capture the bat if it can be done safely.³
  - If a bat touches or lands on a patient a bite may occur.
  - Bites leave small marks that are difficult to see.

  Public Health Services will assess whether rabies vaccine and rabies immune globulin are needed. If yes, they will arrange for the patient to receive these.

  When appropriate, Public Health Services will make arrangements for the assessment of the animal.

If you have further questions about assessing animal bites or administering Rabies Immune Globulin:

Call Public Health Services during regular business hours; if after hours, wait until next business day.

For URGENT AFTER-HOURS CASES, call the on-call Medical Officer of Health through QEII Locating at 473-2222.

Public Health Services