Evaluation of Animal Bites and Other Rabies Exposures for Appropriate Use of Rabies Post-exposure Prophylaxis (PEP)

Has the animal bite penetrated the skin; or has saliva or neural tissue entered an open wound or mucous membrane; or was there potential exposure to a bat*?

- No
  - No exposure has occurred. NO PEP.

- Yes
  - Is the animal a mammal?
    - Yes
      - Rabies naturally infects only mammals. NO PEP.
    - No
      - Is the animal a small rodent or rabbit†?
        - Yes
          - Rabies PEP is almost never indicated. Consult with Maine CDC if considering PEP.
        - No
          - Is the animal at a known location and available for a 10-day confinement and observation‡ or rabies testing?§
            - Yes
              - Rabies PEP should NOT be initiated until after completion of the 10-day confinement and observation period or rabies testing**. Contact Maine CDC for consultation.
            - No
              - Rabies PEP MAY BE indicated depending upon a number of factors††. Contact Maine CDC for assistance in determining need for PEP.

*Bat exposures may be difficult to detect. Please contact Maine CDC for consultation on suspected bat exposures.
†Bites from squirrels, hamsters, guinea pigs, gerbils, chipmunks, rats, mice, and other small rodents and hares almost never require rabies PEP. Consult with Maine CDC if considering PEP.
‡10-day confinement and observation periods apply only to dogs, cats and ferrets.
§If the exposure is to a high risk animal (bat, raccoon, skunk, fox or coyote) and testing cannot be completed within 24-48 hours, PEP may be initiated while awaiting test results. If test results are negative for rabies, PEP may be discontinued.
**In exposures involving bites to the face, immediate rabies PEP may be considered pending results of 10-day observation or rabies testing.
††Recommendations regarding rabies PEP are dependent upon associated risks including: 1) type of exposure, 2) extent or severity of exposure, 3) species of animal involved, 4) epidemiology of animal rabies in the area where the contact occurred, and 5) circumstances of the exposure incident. Contact Maine CDC for assistance in evaluating exposures or determining the need for post-exposure management in situations that are not routine.

- Wound care should be given according to standard practices whether PEP is recommended or not.
- Rabies PEP: For persons NOT previously immunized against rabies and NOT immune compromised, human rabies immune globulin (HRIG) is given once (20 IU/kg) on day 0 according to labeled directions. Four 1.0 mL doses of rabies vaccine should be administered IM, one each day on days 0, 3, 7 and 14. Immune compromised persons should receive a 5th dose on day 28. For persons previously immunized against rabies (received a complete pre-exposure or post-exposure series), HRIG should not be given and only two doses of vaccine should be administered IM, one on day 0 and another on day 3.
- Administration of rabies PEP must be reported to Maine CDC as per 22 MRSA §801-825.
- Maine CDC 24-hour disease reporting and consultation line: 1-800-821-5821.