



# Rabies Risk Assessment Guideline\*

## Types of Exposures:

- Bites,
- scratches,
- contamination of abrasions,
- scratches or cuts of the skin,
- mucous membranes by saliva or other potentially infectious material, such as the brain tissue of a rabid animal.

**Bat Exposures** warrant rabies post-exposure prophylaxis when there is:

- a bite or scratch or where there was direct contact **AND** either of the following cannot be eliminated:
- a bat bite or scratch, or saliva from a live bat entered an open wound or mucous membrane.

**Contact:** Hamilton Public Health Services for any inquiries  
(905) 546-3570

## High Risk Exposures

Animal species	Condition of animal at time of exposure	Reporting required for Public Health Services (PHS)	Management of exposed person
Dog, Cat or Ferret →	Rabid or suspected to be rabid.** Unknown, stray or escaped. →	Phone (905) 546-3570 and Fax (905) 546-2787 →	Local treatment of the wound. Rabies Prophylaxis (Rablg & HDCV or PCECV)
Skunk, bat, fox, coyote, raccoon, and other carnivores. →	Regard as rabid as this area is not considered rabies free. →	Phone (905) 546-3570 and Fax (905) 546-2787 →	Local treatment of the wound. Rabies Prophylaxis (Rablg & HDCV or PCECV)

**Note:** In cases where the bite has occurred to the head or neck, rabies prophylaxis should be started immediately and can be discontinued if the animal test is negative for rabies.

## Low Risk Exposures

Animal species	Condition of animal at time of exposure	Reporting required for Public Health Services (PHS)	Management of exposed person
Dog, Cat or Ferret →	Healthy, and available for 10 day observation →	Fax (905) 546-2787 →	Local treatment of the wound. At first sign of rabies in animal, give Rablg and start HDCV or PCECV. <b>If bite wound is to the head or neck; then begin immediately.</b>
Livestock, rodents, lagomorphs (hares and rabbits) →	Consider Individually. →	Fax (905) 546-2787 <b>If animal behaviour unusual; phone report is also required.</b> (905) 546-3570 →	Local treatment of the wound. Bites of squirrels, chipmunks, rats, mice, hamsters, gerbils, other rodents, rabbits and hares may warrant post-exposure rabies prophylaxis if the behaviour of the biting animal was <b>highly unusual</b> .
Non-contact bats found in bedroom →	Consider individually. Adults are likely to wake to a bat in a room and be aware of an exposure. Children may not be able to give a reliable history. →	Fax (905) 546-27 → <b>If child or adult cannot give a reliable history, phone report is also required.</b> (905) 546-3570 →	Local treatment of the wound. If a bat is found in the room with a child or adult who is unable to give a reliable history, rabies prophylaxis may be warranted. A risk assessment must be conducted by PHS.

\*Based on the Ministry of Ontario Health and Long Term Care Guidelines for Management of Suspected Rabies Exposures, January 2012.

\*\* If animal is available for rabies testing, the vaccine can be discontinued if the fluorescent antibody test of the animal brain is negative.

**Rablg** - human rabies immune globulin **HDCV** - Human diploid cell vaccine (Imovax®)

**PCECV** - Purified chick embryo cell culture