Rabies: Family Health and Prevention for Pet Owners

What if my pet shows signs or symptoms?
Contact your local veterinarian immediately. If symptoms get worse, they should be sent for testing. In order to test if an animal has rabies, it has to be euthanized (humanely killed). Brain samples are sent to state public health or veterinary laboratories for testing. Talk with your primary care physician, veterinarian and public health department about the bite, animal testing and the risks of contracting rabies for you and your pet.

What can I do to protect my family?

- For your pet:
  - Vaccinating your pet(s) (dog, cat, ferret and horse)
  - Stick to vaccination schedules
  - Keep pets in the yard or on a leash when outside
  - Spay or neuter your pet to decrease the number of unwanted animals that may not be properly cared for
  - If your animal has been in a fight or has a bite wound, take them to your local veterinarian for treatment
  - Get your pet licensed
- If you have been bitten, contact your local health department
- Report all stray or sick animals to animal control, DO NOT capture them unless you have been trained to do so.
- Do not feed, touch or keep wild animals. Food may cause that animal to revisit your home, or it can attract others, possibly exposing your family to disease.
- Any dead, sick or injured bat should be collected and tested for rabies if other people, pets or livestock have been exposed to it. Contact animal control for testing.
- Bat proof your home:
  - Bats leave during the fall and winter to hibernate, so this is an ideal time to “bat-proof” your home
  - Caulk openings larger than a quarter-inch by a half-inch
  - Install window screens, chimney caps and draft guards beneath doors to attics
  - Fill electrical and plumbing holes with stainless steel wool or caulking
  - Tightly close all doors to the outside

Let us know what you think!
https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WVBXH6C

Updated: May 2016
**Rabies**

**What is it?**

Rabies is a **fatal** viral zoonotic disease that infects people and other mammals through the saliva of a sick animal. Rabies attacks the central nervous system and can quickly lead to death if not treated. Rabies is mostly spread by wild animals, which is why regularly vaccinating your pets is very important to protect both your pets and families overall health.

**How is it Spread?**

- **Bite:** saliva enters the body from a bite by a sick animal
- **Non-bite:** infected saliva enters the body through scratches, scrapes or open wounds. This also includes infectious tissue getting into your eyes, nose or mouth.

**What are the Sources for Rabies?**

Pets and wild animals are both affected by rabies and help spread the disease. In the U.S., different rabies virus strains have been found in raccoons, skunks, mongooses, foxes, coyotes and several kinds of insect-eating bats. In recent years, cats are the most common domestic animal infected with rabies, due to their owners failing to vaccinate them before exposure. Due to wildlife exposure, it is important that pets receive their required rabies vaccines and boosters.

**Where is it located?**

The common wild animal that has tested positive for Rabies in Ingham County is the bat. In 2009 a Michigan resident died from rabies. They awoke to a bat in their room and did not realize it had bit them while they were sleeping. Bat bites or scratches can go unnoticed due to their small teeth, leaving people unaware of their infection until it is too late. If you wake up and find a bat in your room, find one in an unattended child’s room, near a mentally impaired or intoxicated person, have the bat tested and contact the health department and your primary care physician for consultation.

**1978-2013 RABIES POSITIVE ANIMALS IN MICHIGAN**

**What are the signs, symptoms and treatment for Rabies?**

**Humans:**

It can take weeks to months for symptoms to develop. The early onset of symptoms include:
- Weakness or discomfort
- Fever or headache that can last for days
- Itchiness or a prickling sensation at the site of the bite

Advanced symptoms include:
- Abnormal behavior like excitability, anxiety, confusion, agitation or aggression
- Hallucinations
- Insomnia
- Excessive drooling
- Fear of water
- Paralysis in arms, legs, respiratory muscles and throat

**Animals**

It can take 1 month for symptoms to develop.
- **Early stages (1-3 days):**
  - Mild signs of neurologic dysfunction
  - Lack of appetite
- **Late stages:**
  - Throat and jaw paralysis
  - Excessive drooling
  - Changes in tone of bark
  - Fever
  - Seizures
  - Fear of water
  - Jaw dropped
  - Unusual Shyness, aggression or agitation

**What are the signs, symptoms and treatment for Rabies?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Human Rabies Postexposure Prophylaxis (PEP) Treatment</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Treatment</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unvaccinated</strong></td>
<td>Day 0</td>
<td>Thoroughly clean wound with soap and Water Diazepam shot if it has been longer than 10 years since your last shot. Human Rabies Immune Globulin (HRIG) will be given in the thigh and/or wound based on weight (SEE BELOW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 3</td>
<td>1 Dose Rabies Vaccine</td>
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All rabies vaccinations are given in the arm, while HRIG is injected directly into and around the wound. Any remaining HRIG will be given in the thigh region and it is given based on weight (20 IU/KG). This varies for everyone and can result in multiple shots.

**Family Pet Rabies Treatment**

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<tr>
<td><strong>Unvaccinated</strong></td>
<td>Day 0</td>
<td>Euthanize pet*</td>
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<td>Day 0-180</td>
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<td>If your pet is not euthanized, it will be quarantined** for 4 months (cats and dogs) or 6 months (ferrets) with no direct human contact and vaccinated immediately.</td>
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<td><strong>Over Due</strong></td>
<td>Day 0</td>
<td>Seek veterinary care, clean wound, vaccinate and consult with local public health officials</td>
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<td>Day 0-45</td>
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<td>Closely monitor and control your pet. Quarantine may extend to 6 months depending on delay with vaccination, current health status and local rabies cases</td>
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<td><strong>Vaccinated</strong></td>
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<td>Seek veterinary care, clean wound and re-vaccinate your pet</td>
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* Consult with your local veterinarian and public health officials. These are dealt with on a case-by-case basis and depend on exposure, health status and your hometowns’ incidence of rabies.

**Quarantine:** Strict supervision by local animal control officers with no direct human contact. They can be done at the owners’ expense.

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