

Human Rabies Post-exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) Guide

These guidelines can help determine if PEP is needed after a potential rabies exposure. An exposure is defined as 1) an animal bite (or scratch) that breaks the skin or 2) exposure of broken skin (bled or had serous drainage within the past 24 hours) or mucous membranes to saliva or cerebrospinal fluid. Stool, blood, urine, and skunk spray do not contain rabies virus.

Risk Category of Biting Animal	Laboratory Testing Result	Quarantine/ Observation or Testing	Human Postexposure Prophylaxis
Low (rabbits, opossums, and armadillos, plus mice, rats, squirrels, nutria, shrews, prairie dogs, beavers, gophers, and other rodents)	Testing is not required unless the Local Rabies Control Authority (LRCA) or physician has cause to believe the animal is rabid.	Not applicable	Testing or PEP is not required unless the LRCA or physician has cause to believe the biting animal is rabid.
High¹ (Bats ² , coyotes, foxes, raccoons, skunks) or type of biting animal is unknown	Positive or non-negative ³	Animal tested	Administer PEP (usually acceptable to wait up to 72 hours for test results or efforts to locate the animal before beginning PEP unless animal displayed signs compatible with rabies).
	Negative	Animal tested	PEP not administered.
	Animal not available	Not possible	Administer PEP.
Dog, Cat, Domestic Ferret⁴	Positive	Animal tested	Administer PEP (usually acceptable to wait up to 72 hours for test results or efforts to locate the animal before beginning PEP unless animal displayed signs compatible with rabies).
	Negative	Animal tested	PEP not administered.
	Not tested pending outcome of quarantine (animal placed in quarantine or home confinement until end of a 10-day observation period).	Animal placed in quarantine or home confinement until end of a 10-day observation period. If animal shows clinical signs of rabies, it should be immediately euthanized and tested.	PEP not administered if animal is available for 10-day observation. If animal shows clinical signs of rabies, it should be immediately euthanized and tested; PEP could be started immediately without waiting for test results and discontinued if test is negative.
	Animal not available or non-negative ³	Not possible	Consult public health professional.
All Other Warm-Blooded Animals	Positive	Animal tested	Administer PEP.
	Negative	Animal tested	PEP not administered.
	Non-negative ³	Animal tested	Consult public health professional.
	Not tested	30-day observation ⁵	Consult public health professional.
	Animal not available	Not possible	Consult public health professional.

1. Refer to Texas Administrative Code, Sections 169.27(e) and (h) or consult with the Local Rabies Control Authority for your area pertaining to exemptions to mandatory euthanasia for certain high-risk animals that meet captivity parameters as specified in state law: [http://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac\\$ext.ViewTAC?tac_view=5&ti=25&pt=1&ch=169&sch=A&rl=Y](http://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac$ext.ViewTAC?tac_view=5&ti=25&pt=1&ch=169&sch=A&rl=Y)

2. In incidents involving bats, PEP may be appropriate even in the absence of demonstrable bite, scratch, or mucous membrane exposure in situations in which there is reasonable probability that such exposure may have occurred (e.g., sleeping individual awakes to find a bat in the room, a person witnesses a bat in the room with a previously unattended child, mentally challenged person, intoxicated individual, etc.).

3. "Non-negative" includes all specimens not suitable for testing (destroyed, decomposed, etc.).

4. The decision whether a dog, cat, or domestic ferret should be euthanized and tested or quarantined rests with the Local Rabies Control Authority.

5. The Local Rabies Control Authority may authorize a 30-day observation period in lieu of testing.

