

Tips to Avoid Rabies

- Vaccinate your pets
- Don't let your pet roam free outdoors, especially at night
- Avoid contact with wild animals
- Do not feed wild animals, or leave pets' food bowls outside.
- Teach children to never approach an unfamiliar animal.
- If you find a bat, alive or dead, do not touch it. If the bat is in your house, open windows to give it an escape. If found in your bedroom, call Health Links for advice as you may have been bitten while sleeping.
- If your pet was in contact with a wild animal, do not touch your pet with bare skin. Wear work gloves when comforting pets or checking for injuries.

Contact Health Links at 1-888-315-9257 if you have questions or concerns about an animal encounter.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: My pet is up-to-date with the rabies vaccination. Do I need to quarantine my pet for 10 days?

A: The rabies vaccination is not 100% effective. The quarantine is to ensure your pet is healthy.

Q: Why 10 days?

A: When a dog or cat has rabies, 10 days is the longest amount of time it takes before signs of the disease are obvious.

Q: What if I was bitten by a wild animal?

A: Bites from wild animals have a higher risk for exposure to rabies. If the animal can not be captured and tested, Public Health will recommend post exposure treatment.

Q: What is considered a possible rabies encounter?

A: Rabies is spread when saliva or spinal fluid from an infected animal comes into contact with fresh broken skin (bites, scratches, fresh cuts) or mucus membranes (the skin of the mouth or eyes).



**I have been bitten or scratched...
Now what?**



**Public Health
Interlake Eastern
Regional
Health Authority**



Interlake-Eastern
Regional Health Authority



A bite or scratch may be an accident, but it still

Rabies is a communicable disease that needs to be taken seriously.

Rabies is fatal if not treated before symptoms appear.

Manitoba has the second highest rate of animal rabies in Canada.

Rabies is a virus that can be passed from animal to animal or from animal to human through bites or scratches.

When an animal bite or scratch occurs, Public Health conducts a no-blame investigation meant to reduce rabies risk to humans.



When bitten or scratched by any animal

Step One: Clean the wound and report the encounter

Immediately after an animal encounter, take note of the animal owner's name and phone number. Clean the wound well with soap and water.

Many animal bites and scratches require a tetanus vaccination. It is a good idea to see your health care provider, a Quick Care Clinic or Walk In Clinic to get your wound assessed. If it is a serious injury, go to Emergency Room.

Your health care professional will fill out an animal exposure Form to send to Public Health.

If you are not planning on getting medical attention, call Health Links at 1-888-315-9257 to report the encounter.

Step Two: Investigation

It doesn't matter if the encounter was with a pet, a stray or a wild animal, they are all followed up by Public Health.

The nurse will contact you and then the animal owner to investigate vaccination status and health of the animal. The owner will be asked to isolate and observe the animal for 10 days. If it was an unowned animal, an attempt will be made to find and capture the animal for quarantine.

The goal of Public Health is education and prevention of human rabies cases.

We do not take pets away from their homes.

Step Three: Outcome

Public Health will contact the animal owner on day 10 to inquire about the health of the animal. If the animal is healthy, then the rabies risk from that encounter drops to near zero. No further follow-up required at that point.

**Some animals have a longer quarantine period (i.e. horses and pigs) **

**If the animal has died, testing will be carried out. If the test is positive for rabies or if the animal can not be found, the person exposed may need post encounter treatment. (a series of vaccinations). The nurse would discuss this with the individual.*

Destroying an animal that was involved in an animal encounter is discouraged by Public Health. If you choose to euthanize (destroy) the animal, please do not damage the animal's head or put yourself at risk. Please contact Public Health before destroying a pet that was involved in a bite or scratching episode.

