What to Expect with Rabies Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP)

Bring this fact sheet with you when you go to the emergency room!

If you or your health care provider have any questions or concerns about human rabies immunoglobulin (HRIG) or the rabies vaccine, or how they are administered, please contact Tioga County Public Health at 607-687-8600.

Rabies is a fatal disease spread through exposure to a rabies-infected animal.

If you were bitten or scratched by an animal that had or is suspected of having rabies, you may need to receive rabies post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP). Rabies is completely preventable with proper PEP.

Rabies PEP may also be recommended if you were exposed to rabies because you had a fresh wound or mucous membrane (mouth, eyes or nose) that may have been contaminated with saliva from a rabid animal, or if you were possibly bitten by a bat.

What is Rabies Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP)?

Rabies PEP includes one dose of human rabies immune globulin (HRIG) and four doses of rabies vaccine given over two weeks. HRIG provides immediate protection while the vaccine helps your body's immune system fight the virus.

If you were previously vaccinated against rabies (you received rabies pre-exposure prophylaxis or rabies PEP for an earlier animal bite or exposure), <u>regardless of how long ago you were vaccinated</u>, PEP will include two doses of rabies vaccine given over three days without HRIG.

Harmful side effects to rabies vaccines and HRIG are not common. Minor reactions to rabies vaccines may include pain, redness, swelling or itching at the injection site. Rarely, symptoms such as headache, nausea, abdominal pain, muscle aches and dizziness have been reported. Pain at the injection site and low-grade fever may follow HRIG treatment.

For People Who Have Never Received Rabies Vaccination

Immediate Wound Care	☐ Immediately clean the wound with soap and water to help remove dirt and germs. ☐ Seek healthcare! A healthcare provider will decide how to best treat serious injuries that require medication, stitches, or surgery.

Day 0
 	
The day you receive your first rabies vaccine is counted as day 0.
	☐ **Human Rabies Immune Globulin (HRIG)**
	  • HRIG is given according to your weight. The higher a person's weight, the larger the dose.
	  • HRIG should be injected into and around the wound(s). Any remaining HRIG should be injected into a larger muscle like an arm or thigh.
	  • HRIG should not be given in the same site as the rabies vaccine.
	☐ **Rabies Vaccine #1**
	  • The first dose of rabies vaccine should not be given in the same muscle where HRIG was injected.
	  • All doses of rabies vaccine should be injected in an arm muscle.
	    ○ For children, the thigh muscle can also be used.
	☐ Consider a **tetanus shot** if it has been more than 10 years since your last shot.

Day 3	☐ **Rabies Vaccine # 2** • All other doses of rabies vaccine should be given in the arm muscle (or thigh for small children) and it is ok to be given at the site of initial HRIG if necessary
Day 7	☐ **Rabies Vaccine # 3**
Day 14	☐ **Rabies Vaccine # 4**
Day 28	☐ **Rabies Vaccine # 5** • Immunosuppressed persons may require a fifth dose.

PLEASE NOTE: Deviations from the schedule are _discouraged_. However, patients who are two or three days late (or early) for their next rabies shot should continue the series and keep the recommended spacing between doses. For deviations greater than one week, please consult with Tioga County Public Health at 607-687-8600.

For People Previously Vaccinated for Rabies

Immediate Wound Care	☐ Immediately clean the wound with soap and water to help remove dirt and germs. ☐ Seek healthcare! A healthcare provider will decide how to best treat serious injuries that require medication, stitches, or surgery.

Day 0
 	
The day you receive your first rabies vaccine is counted as day 0.
	☐ **Rabies Vaccine #1**
	  • All doses of rabies vaccine should be injected in an arm muscle.
	    ○ For children, the thigh muscle can also be used.
	☐ Consider a **tetanus shot** if it has been more than 10 years since your last shot.

Day 3	☐ **Rabies Vaccine # 2**