



Pat Quinn, Governor  
Damon T. Arnold, M.D., M.P.H., Director

525-535 West Jefferson Street • Springfield, Illinois 62761-0001 • [www.idph.state.il.us](http://www.idph.state.il.us)

TO: Local Health Departments, Regional Offices of Illinois Department of Public Health, Emergency Departments, Infectious Disease Physicians, Infection Control Professionals

FROM: Connie Austin, D.V.M., M.P.H., Ph.D.  
State Public Health Veterinarian

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SUBJECT: Rabies Post-exposure Prophylaxis Protocol, March 2013

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Rabies post-exposure prophylaxis is a complicated regimen and errors can be made in administration. The document containing recommendations for rabies PEP is entitled, "Human Rabies Prevention – United States, 2008. Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices". This document can be found at: <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5703a1.htm>

The recommended rabies PEP regimen for an immunocompetent person not previously vaccinated for rabies includes concurrent administration of HRIG and rabies vaccine on day 0, followed by rabies vaccination on days 3, 7 and 14. A summary table of the rabies PEP regimen is provided at the end of this document. After the release of the ACIP on rabies prevention, the committee reviewed the data on rabies PEP and determined that the fifth dose of rabies vaccine on day 28 was not needed for immunocompetent individuals. Vaccine and HRIG on day 0 should be given at separate locations. HRIG provides an immediate supply of virus neutralizing antibodies to bridge the gap until the production of active immunity following vaccine administration. Active antibody response from vaccine takes 7 to 10 days to develop. Use of HRIG provides a rapid, passive immunity that persists with a half life of approximately 21 days.

In persons who are immunocompromised, an additional rabies vaccine dose should be administered on Day 28. In persons who are pre-exposure vaccinated for rabies or who have previously received rabies PEP, rabies PEP consists of two doses of rabies vaccine on days 0 and 3 with no need to administer HRIG.

Incorrect administration of rabies PEP may result in the need to repeat vaccine doses.

Information on rabies biologics can be found on the IDPH Sharepoint site (Communicable Disease, A-Z, rabies) for local health departments and others who have access to this site. Health care providers can contact their local health department for this information.

We are requesting that each hospital emergency department review their rabies PEP regimen protocol and make sure that it includes the proper administration protocol as listed below. Hospital emergency department personnel can contact their local health department for any questions about rabies PEP and whether rabies PEP is recommended for any particular exposure.

Administration of rabies PEP should start as soon as possible after the exposure. There is NO recommendation for serology to be done prior to administration of rabies PEP. That would slow down the process of rabies PEP administration unnecessarily. Results from serology would not influence whether rabies PEP should be administered.

### Summary of the Rabies PEP Regimen

| Product   | Recommended time of administration  | Administration details  |
|---|---|---|
| HRIG  | Day 0 (if not administered on day 0 can be given up to and including day 7 of the vaccine series) | 20 IU/kg. If anatomically feasible, infiltrate the bite wound with the full dose. Any remaining volume should be given IM at a site distant from vaccine administration. The deltoid, (opposite arm from where vaccine is given) is recommended. If a non-bite exposure occurred, HRIG can be given IM at a site distant from vaccine administration (deltoid opposite arm from where vaccine is given). Not needed for patient previously given full series of rabies PEP or patient pre-exposure vaccinated for rabies. |
| Rabies vaccine dose 1                                       | Day 0   | Administered IM. In deltoid for adults. For children, anterolateral aspect of the thigh is also acceptable. The gluteal area should NEVER be used because it results in lower titers.   |
| Rabies vaccine dose 2                                       | Day 3   | See vaccine dose 1 information  |
| Rabies vaccine dose 3                                       | Day 7   | See vaccine dose 1 information  |
| Rabies vaccine dose 4                                       | Day 14  | See vaccine dose 1 information  |
| Rabies vaccine dose 5 (for immunocompromised patients only) | Day 28  | See vaccine dose 1 information  |