

Rabies

What is it?

- Rabies is caused by an infection with the rabies virus.
- Rabies affects the nervous system of humans and animals.
- Human symptoms include:
 - headache
 - fever
 - strange behaviour
 - muscle spasm
 - hard time swallowing
 - lots of drooling
- Once a person develops symptoms, there is no cure and the infected person almost always dies.

How is it spread?

- The virus is carried in the saliva (spit) of an infected animal.
- People usually get infected after a rabid animal bites them. Rabies can spread when the infected animal saliva gets into a cut, wound, or mucous membrane (lining of the mouth, nose or eyes).
- It takes about 3 to 8 weeks for rabies to develop after a person is exposed to a rabid animal. However, the symptoms may appear as soon as 5 days afterwards to more than 1 year later.

If you think you have come in contact with rabies, act now:

- wash the affected skin area with soap and water for several minutes
- wash the clothing in hot soapy water, if the animal saliva is on your clothing
- call your doctor or go to the nearest emergency room

Your risk of contacting rabies must be checked and if needed, treatment started.

Is there treatment for it?

- If rabies develops, there is no cure.
- However, it can be prevented by having the rabies vaccine and rabies immune globulin (RIG). These must be given as soon as possible after exposure to an animal that may have rabies.

What can be done to prevent the spread of it?

- Make sure your pets get their rabies vaccine. Keep all vaccines up to date!
- Do not let your pets roam free outdoors, especially at night.
- Avoid contact with wildlife and do not handle wild animals. This includes not feeding wildlife. Appreciate them from a distance.
- Teach your children not to go near animals they do not know, even if they seem friendly or are sick and need help.
- Report stray or sick looking animals or wildlife to Animal Control.

For more information

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

<http://www.cdc.gov/rabies/index.html>

**Stop the spread of germs and infection.
Clean your hands.**

