

RABIES



ALL SUSPECTED CASES OF RABIES MUST BE REPORTED IMMEDIATELY TO NAPA COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH COMMUNICABLE DISEASE UNIT

Contact Information:

During Business Hours: (707) 299 -1499

After Business Hours (Napa County Answering Service): (707) 265 -3131

Epidemiology:

- Rabies is a viral infection transmitted in the saliva of infected mammals.
- Common modes of rabies virus transmissions are through bites and contact with saliva of an infected host. Other various routes of transmission include contamination of mucous membranes, aerosol transmission, and corneal transplantations.
- Any penetration of the skin by teeth regardless of location, represents a potential risk of rabies transmission.

Clinical:

- Possible exposures include animal bites, or mucous membrane contamination with infectious material, such as saliva.
- Rabies virus infects the central nervous system, causing encephalopathy and ultimately death.
- Early symptoms of rabies in humans are nonspecific, consisting of fever, headache, and general malaise.
- As the disease progresses, neurological symptoms appear and may include insomnia, anxiety, confusion, slight or partial paralysis, excitation, hallucinations, agitation, hypersalivation, difficulty swallowing, and hydrophobia (fear of water).
- Death usually occurs within days of the onset of symptoms.

Laboratory Diagnosis:

- Laboratory diagnosis of rabies is based on fluorescent antibody testing of brain tissue from the animal to which the patient was exposed.

Treatment:

- Postexposure prophylaxis (PEP) is indicated for persons likely exposed to a suspected rabid animal.
- PEP should begin as soon as possible after an exposure with immediate wound cleaning and treatment followed by appropriate administration of rabies immune globulin (RIG) and rabies vaccine.

Prophylaxis:

- In the United States, PEP consists of a regimen of one dose of RIG and five doses of rabies vaccine over a 28 day period.
- Rabies immune globulin and the first dose of rabies vaccine should be given as soon as possible after exposure.
- For a complete PEP protocol see www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvrd/rabies/ . Click on prevention and control.