

Bites

Person bitten by a mammal

Reporting: All mammal bites should be reported within 24 hrs via telephone to the [local health department](#) (LHD) in the jurisdiction where the bite occurred. Some LHDs have specific Animal Bite Reporting forms that may be faxed. Veterinarians do not have independent authority to quarantine an animal or require an owner to euthanize and test an animal; this is the responsibility of the LHD.

Animal Management: Although dogs, cats and ferrets can be quarantined for 10 days. This does not apply to other species. If the biting animal is already dead or must be euthanized, save the head for testing. Bites from old world primates are at special risk of Simian B transmission. Screening of the biting monkey for this disease should be considered and physicians should be notified of this additional disease risk so the patient can be properly evaluated. Contact LHD for additional recommendations to manage primate exposures.

Transmission: Any break in the skin by the teeth of a mammal, and any contact where saliva may have entered an open wound or mucous membrane is considered a rabies exposure. Scratches without saliva contact are not considered rabies exposures. Rabies virus is not transmitted through blood, urine, or skunk spray. In Ohio, bats and wild carnivores are the major reservoirs for rabies that can also spill over into other domestic animals and humans.

Diagnostics:

- Laboratory: There is no test for persons recently bitten by an animal that can determine whether that person was exposed or is incubating rabies
- DFA: fresh brain tissue from the biting animal will be positive if the animal was shedding virus

Sample Submission:

- ODHL is the only lab in Ohio that performs DFA testing. The Rabies Test Submission Report form is available at: <http://www.odh.ohio.gov/pdf/forms/hea2539.pdf>
- Live animals are not accepted. Small animals such as bats and rodents can be submitted whole, while only the head of animals such as cats and dogs should be submitted. For large animals (horses and cattle), only submit the brain. Entire heads of large animals can be sent to ODA Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory who will remove the brain and forward brain samples to ODHL, when requested.
- Place the specimen in a watertight bag, keep the sample refrigerated or packed with ice, but do not freeze. For shipping procedures, contact your LHD.

Personal protection: Pre-exposure rabies prophylaxis is recommended for those who regularly handle high-risk animals or work in occupations that have an elevated risk of rabies exposure. Persons handling potentially rabid animals should take precautions, including proper training, to avoid being bitten. To avoid contact with neural tissue when performing decapitations for rabies testing, minimum protection should include gloves, eyewear, and a protective apron.

All persons who are bitten by an animal should immediately wash the wound thoroughly with soap and water. Bite victims should always be told to contact their physician. In addition to rabies, there is a risk of tetanus and other infections.

If a rabies suspect animal must be dispatched without benefit of conventional euthanasia, every effort should be made to prevent damage to the brain. If the animal must be shot, the shooter should protect against unintended splatter. Dead animals should be handled as if they were rabid: avoid direct contact by using gloves or a shovel to move the animal.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

[ODH Rabies Web Page](#)

[Rabies: Information for Health Care Professionals, CDC](#)

[NASPHV Rabies Compendium](#)

[B Virus \(Cercopithecine Herpesvirus Infection, CDC NCID](#)