

**Mission:**

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.

**Vision:**

To be the **Healthiest State** in the Nation



**Ron DeSantis**  
Governor

**Joseph A. Ladapo, MD, PhD**  
State Surgeon General

## Rabies Exposure Guidance for Medical Professionals

### Risk Assessment Questions

(Adapted from FloridaHealth.gov)

- Did the bite/scratch break the skin? Bat bites may not be clearly visible.
- What is the animal's risk category? See chart below.
- What is the animal's rabies exposure risk?\*
- Is the animal available for observation, capture (if wild or stray), or testing (wildlife)?

Risk Category	Biting Animal	What To Do	
High Risk	Outdoor cats; wild animals: bats, raccoons, foxes, bobcats, skunks, otters	Initiate post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) unless animal can be tested promptly.	
Moderate Risk	Stray dogs, head/neck bites**	PEP may be initiated on case-by-case basis.	
Low Risk	Healthy appearing domestic animals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Dogs (leash-walked, vaccinated dogs)**†</li> <li>- Cats (strictly indoor, vaccinated cats)**†</li> <li>- Ferrets and rabbits (housed indoors)</li> <li>- Small rodents (rats, squirrels)</li> <li>- Livestock including horses</li> <li>- Non-human primates (vaccinated and healthy appearing)</li> </ul>	PEP rarely necessary.	Dogs and cats can be observed for 10 days.  Livestock can be observed for 14 days.  Non-human primates can be observed for 14 days. (Veterinary assessment required at start and end of confinement period.)

\*Owned *and* unvaccinated (or previously vaccinated) dogs and cats that are routinely supervised when outdoors and with no wildlife exposure have a low risk of being exposed to rabies.

† Nail scratches from healthy appearing dogs or healthy, vaccinated, strictly indoor cats with no contact with outdoor animals do not pose a rabies exposure risk.

\*\*Rabies incubation period can be shorter for head/neck bites, call and report to the county health department immediately.

**NOTE: If the biting animal is an owned dog or cat, and it is alive and healthy appearing 10 days following the bite to the human, the rabies exposure risk is eliminated.**

### Rabies PEP Vaccination Schedule

(Adapted from ACIP and 2014 Florida Rabies Guide)

Product/ Method	Route	Unvaccinated Person	Previously Vaccinated Person	Immunocompromised Person
HRIG‡	Infiltrate Wound	Day 0	None	Day 0
Rabies Vaccine	IM (not gluteals)	Day 0, 3, 7, 14	Day 0, 3	Day 0, 3, 7, 14, 28
Titers	N/A	None	Varies	1-2 weeks post vaccination

‡DOH-Manatee does **not** administer human rabies immune globulin (HRIG). Administer HRIG distal to the rabies vaccine injection site.

### Patient Discharge Instructions

- Provide discharge documents containing:
  - Rabies vaccine information
  - Dates administered
  - Follow up vaccination schedule

### Submit a Bite Report

Visit [Rabies Surveillance - Florida Department of Health in Manatee County](#) to download the paper bite report **or** submit a bite report online. Fax paper reports to 941-714-7164.