

# Hot Zone Bulletin

## SUBJECT: RABIES INFECTION AND ANIMALS

Rabies is an infectious disease that spreads from animals to humans. The rabies virus causes the disease by infecting nerves in animals and people. The rabies virus travels to the brain (through nerves inside the brain), the virus reproduces and then it travels back through the nerves to most parts of the body. Eventually, the virus reaches the salivary glands where it is released into the saliva in the mouth. By this time, the disease has usually damaged the brain, sometimes producing violent behavior. It eventually causes death.

## HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE FOR RABIES TO DEVELOP?

In people, the incubation period (the time between initial contact with the virus and onset of the disease) generally ranges from two to eight weeks. In rare cases, it can vary from 10 days to 2 years. The incubation period is shorter in children and in people exposed to a large dose of the rabies virus. The dose of virus depends on the size, severity and location of an animal bite or scratch. In animals, the incubation period depends on the species of animal. For dogs it normally ranges between 14 and 60 days, but it can be much longer.

## WHAT IS THE SOURCE OF RABIES?

The major risk of rabies comes from contact with the saliva, body fluids, or tissue of infected animals. Animals that can be infected with rabies include all mammals, but in particular:

- Wild animals – mostly foxes, skunks, bats, and raccoons
- Livestock – mostly cattle but occasionally horses, sheep, goats and pigs
- Pets – mostly cats and dogs

**It is rarely found in rodents such as mice, squirrels, chipmunks, groundhogs, rabbits, rats, hamsters, or gerbils, so their bites do not usually pose a risk for rabies.**

## HOW DO RABIES INFECTIONS OCCUR?

To cause an infection, the rabies virus must enter the body and reach nerve cells. The virus can enter the body through broken skin. Droplets containing the virus can pass through mucous membranes in the eyes, nose, mouth, or intestine. Usually, transmission occurs when rabid animals, with the virus in their saliva, bite people. Farmers or veterinarians can become infected when they work with their hands in the mouths of rabid animals. Animal care and laboratory workers may also contract rabies from cuts or sticks from contaminated needles, scalpels, or other contaminated laboratory equipment.

## WHAT OCCUPATIONS HAVE INCREASED RISK OF RABIES?

Rabies is an occupational risk for people who work with wild animals, livestock, or pets.

**Exposure to pets** – veterinarians and their assistants, pet groomers, letter carriers, meter readers, delivery personnel, laboratory animal researchers and technicians, animal control officers, and hunters.

**Exposure to livestock** – farmers, farm workers, ranchers, veterinarians and their assistants, artificial insemination technicians, laboratory animal researchers and their technicians, slaughterhouse workers, and meat packers and processors.

**Exposure to wild animals** – hunters, trappers, forestry personnel, wildlife biologists, forest rangers, conservation officers, taxidermists, veterinarians and their assistants, zoo personnel, and scientists working in caves.

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### WHAT IS THE TREATMENT FOR RABIES?

There is no successful treatment for rabies once the disease has progressed to the point where signs appear. Only three patients in medical history have survived the disease after it has progressed to this stage. Medical treatment can sometimes extend life but the disease eventually ends in death. It is very important to stop the disease from developing in people who may have been exposed to the rabies virus.

### WHAT IS RECOMMENDED FOR WORKPLACE HYGIENE?

Develop procedures to prevent contact with the rabies virus within the workplace. Where appropriate, have workplace procedures posted for disinfecting and sterilizing areas that may be contaminated with the rabies virus.

Wear protective face masks, gloves, clothes, and shoes when handling anything from an animal suspected to have rabies or when cleaning areas where suspected rabid animals are confined.

The rabies virus does not survive long outside of animals. It is generally destroyed by heat, sunlight, or air. EPA registered disinfectants with a rabies virus kill claim can also destroy the virus.

Routinely disinfect working surfaces, tools and instruments, floors and walls that may have been contaminated with fluids from animals, using procedures established for infection control.

### A RECOMMENDED SOLUTION:



### Efficacy Is Everything!

With Organic Soil Tolerance for use in Veterinary Clinics, Pet Shops, Kennels, Animal Care Facilities, Tack Shops, Animal Life Science Laboratories, Breeding and Grooming Establishments, Zoos, Food Processing Facilities and Farms.

#### CANINE EFFICACY

Bordetella (Kennel Cough)  
Canine Parvovirus (CPV)  
Canine Adenovirus  
Canine Distemper  
Canine Parainfluenza Virus  
Canine Hepatitis  
Infectious Bronchitis Virus  
Rabies Virus

#### AVIAN EFFICACY

Avian Influenza A H9N2  
Avian Laryngotracheitis  
Avian Influenza A H5N1 Virus  
Avian Reovirus

Please see product specification sheet for a complete efficacy list.

#### FELINE EFFICACY

Feline Calicivirus (virulent strain)  
Feline Infectious Peritonitis  
Feline leukemia virus  
Feline Panleukopenia  
Feline Picornavirus  
Feline Rhinotracheitis