



NATIONWIDE CHILDREN'S
When your child needs a hospital, everything matters.

Helping Hand™

Health Education for Patients and Families

Rabies Vaccine Treatment

Rabies is a serious disease caused by a virus that attacks the nerves and brain of warm-blooded animals (mammals). In the United States, the most common wild animals that can carry rabies are raccoons, skunks, foxes, coyotes, and bats. Although rare, pet dogs and cats who have not been vaccinated can get it.

An infected animal carries the virus in their spit (saliva). If that animal bites or scratches a person (or another animal), the virus can spread. A rabid bat can spread the virus without biting the person if the saliva gets on their skin.

You should consider any bite by a wild animal as a risk for rabies until proven otherwise. It is important to get medical help right away.

After a Bite or Scratch From an Animal

- If a strange or unknown animal bites or scratches your child, wash the area with soap and water. Then call or go see a doctor or health care provider right away. They will tell you if your child needs anti-rabies treatment.
- **Do not wait until your child has symptoms. Untreated rabies is almost always deadly.**
- Your child may need 4 to 6 shots (injections) over the next 2 weeks, depending on their medical history. They may get 1 rabies immune globulin (RIG). They will get 4 rabies vaccines or 5 if they are immunosuppressed.
 - People get RIG if they have never received it before. Your child will get RIG and their first rabies vaccine at the same time.

Schedule for Rabies Vaccines

- All rabies vaccines must be taken over 2 weeks to be effective and to prevent getting rabies.
- Today, your child's doctor or health care provider gave them RIG and their first rabies vaccine. Your child needs to return to Nationwide Children's Hospital Main Campus Urgent Care or Lewis Center Emergency Department (ED) on these specific days to get the rest of the vaccines:

2nd rabies vaccine (day 3): _____
3rd rabies vaccine (day 7): _____
4th rabies vaccine (day 14): _____
- Please call Urgent Care on the main campus or the Lewis Center ED 1 hour before you come so that the vaccine will be ready.
 - Urgent Care on main campus: call (614) 722-4334. Open 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. each day.
 - Lewis Center ED: call (614) 355-7925. Open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- If you cannot return to the Nationwide Children's Hospital Urgent Care on the days scheduled, let us know right away. To reschedule, call (614) 722-4300. Reaction to Rabies Treatment

Reaction to Rabies Treatment

Side effects (reactions) to the rabies treatment are rare. They may include the following:

- Slight fever, chills
- Muscle aches
- Slight headache or dizziness
- Weakness or fatigue
- Pain, redness, swelling, or itchiness at injection site
- Stomachache, nausea, vomiting

Interactions

The RIG rabies vaccine uses a live virus. It can affect how well other live vaccines work. Tell your child's doctor or health care provider if they get anti-rabies vaccines. Your child may need a booster vaccine for one recently received or have to wait 4 months before getting other vaccines like the MMR (measles, mumps, and rubella).

How to Avoid Animal Bites

Teach your child how to avoid animal bites. If approached by an animal that may attack:

- **Never scream and run.**
- Stand very still with your hands at your sides. Avoid eye contact with the dog.
- Once the animal loses interest in you, slowly back away until it's out of sight.
- If the animal does attack, give it your jacket or put something between you and the animal, like a book bag.
- If you fall or are knocked to the ground, curl into a ball with your hands over your ears and do not move. Stay still and try not to scream or move.
- Never tease or chase an animal or pull its ears, tail, or paws, even if you know the animal.
- Always **walk away** if an animal is or starts growling when approached. **Do not run!**
- Do not bother an animal while it's eating.
- Do not eat or carry food when a strange animal is nearby.
- Never try to pet or catch a wild animal.
- Do not go near stray animals or animals you do not know.

Ways to Prevent Rabies

- Get your dog, cat, or ferret vaccinated against rabies. Have them wear their rabies tag.
- Keep cats and dogs away from wildlife. Walk dogs on a leash.
- If you see any animal acting strangely, call Animal Control.
- If you see a bat in your house, leave it alone. Call Franklin County Public Health at (614) 525-3160 to remove a dead bat or call Animal Control to catch it.
- Never adopt wild animals or try to nurse sick, wild animals back to health. If you find a sick or injured wild animal, call Animal Control, your local veterinarian, or, in the Central Ohio area, the Crisis Hotline for the Ohio Wildlife Center at (614) 793-9453.
- **All animal bites must be reported to Franklin County Public Health within 24 hours.** Call (614) 525-3160 or search for the Animal Bite Intake form at: www.myfcph.org. The form will ask for:
 - The owner's name, address, and phone number (if known)
 - Type, color, and breed of the animal
 - Proof of a rabies vaccine or a rabies tag