PROTOCOL FOR DOGS, CATS, FERRETS, OR LIVESTOCK POSSIBLY EXPOSED TO RABIES

Dog, cat, ferret or livestock exposed 1 to bat or other wild animal (mammal)

Exposed dog/cat/ferret/livestock has current rabies vaccination 2, 3

1. Revaccinate immediately, and
2. Have owner observe for 45 days

Exposed dog/cat/ferret/livestock does NOT have current rabies vaccination

Test bat or other wild animal. If animal is NOT available, must proceed as if positive

Euthanize and test dog/cat/ferret/livestock for rabies if it becomes ill, with signs suggestive of rabies, or dies during observation period

Results Positive

Immediately euthanize exposed dog/cat/ferret/livestock

Results Negative

Vaccinate dog/cat/ferret/livestock against rabies

If owner refuses euthanasia of animal:
1. Advise owner of potential health risks
2. Strict quarantine for 6 months
3. Euthanize and test dog/cat/ferret/livestock for rabies if it becomes ill, with signs suggestive of rabies, or dies during confinement period
4. Vaccination may be administered at beginning of confinement, or at month 5 of confinement

[1] If questions of exposure:
1. First call your local health department and animal control offices.
2. If they are unavailable, during business hours, call the Michigan Department of Agriculture (MDA) at (517) 373-1077 OR the Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) at (517) 335-8165.
3. After 5:00 PM and weekends, call MDA at (517) 373-0440 OR MDCH at (517) 335-9030.

[2] An animal is considered “currently” vaccinated against rabies if a licensed veterinarian has administered a vaccine product approved for use in that species within 12 months if it was the animals FIRST vaccination (First vaccination is by 4 months of age for dogs; 12 weeks for ferrets; cats are not required to be vaccinated by Michigan law, but is strongly recommended due to the predatory nature of cats). For SUBSEQUENT rabies vaccinations, current means administered by a veterinarian within 1 or 3 years from previous vaccination, depending on vaccine used.

[3] Livestock: Consideration should be given to vaccinating livestock that are particularly valuable. Animals that have frequent contact with humans (e.g., in petting zoos, fairs and other public exhibitions) and horses traveling interstate should be currently vaccinated.
RABIES PROTOCOL
FOR MAMMALS WHICH HAVE BITTEN PEOPLE OR PETS

Person or pet bitten or scratched by...

WILD ANIMAL (MAMMAL)

Owner wants animal

Confine 10 days

Test if animal becomes ill, with signs suggestive of rabies, or dies during confinement

Euthanize and test if appropriate species

Healthy animal

Owner doesn’t want animal

Euthanize and test

Alternative, confine animal 10 days. If it remains healthy, it is considered rabies-free at end of 10-day period.

Animal showing signs of rabies

Euthanize and test

Healthy animal

STRAY DOG/CAT/FERRET (Vaccination status unknown)

Confine at Animal Control for statutory holding time, then euthanize and test

Test if animal becomes ill, with signs suggestive of rabies, or dies during confinement

OWNED DOG/CAT/FERRET (Vaccinated or Unvaccinated)

Euthanize and test

Healthy animal

STRAY DOG/CAT/FERRET

Euthanize and test

OTHER DOMESTIC ANIMAL

Chipmunk

Guinea Pig

Mouse

Rabbit

Gerbil

Hamster

Muskrat

Rat

Gopher

Mole

Vole

Prairie Dog

Squirrel

Shrew

Note: Woodchucks are an exception to this list and are tested

[4] Livestock and exhibit animals that bite people are assessed individually (a separate zoo animal rabies flowchart is available @ www.michigan.gov/rabies). In all instances of other domestic animal species, contact the Michigan Department of Community Health at (517) 335-8165 or notify the Michigan Department of Agriculture (MDA) at (517) 373-1077.

[5] The animals listed at right are rarely infected with rabies and have not been known to transmit rabies to humans. These species will not be tested except by special arrangement with the Michigan Department of Community Health at (517) 335-8165. After 5:00 PM and on weekends, dial (517) 335-9030.

[6] Act 224 of 1969: Four days with no collar, license, MDA tattoo, or other evidence of ownership; or 7 days with evidence of ownership.

For more information, please visit: www.michigan.gov/rabies or www.cdc.gov/rabies

Prepared by:
Michigan Department of Community Health
Zoonotic and Special Projects Section
August 2009