



Riverside County
Public Health

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Disease Control Branch

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Public Health Advisory on Increased Human Contact with Rabid Bats September 1, 2015

SITUATION UPDATE

Over the last three weeks, there have been three incidents involving human contact with bats which tested positive for rabies. Each exposure warranted rabies post exposure prophylaxis (PEP). While the investigation is still in progress, it appears that rabies PEP is indicated for approximately 15 individuals. Although rabies is rare in humans, when it does occur, it is most often fatal. No human cases of rabies have occurred in Riverside County.

Animal rabies testing is done by the Riverside County Public Health Lab. To date for 2015, four out of 16 bats with human contact tested positive for rabies; four out of 25 bats without human contact have tested positive for rabies.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

While all mammals are susceptible to rabies, bat bites are of the highest concern for rabies exposure in Riverside County followed by bites from wild carnivores such as skunks, raccoons, and coyotes. Bites from gnawing mammals, such as hares, and small rodents, such as squirrels, hamsters, rats and mice, are of lowest concern for rabies exposure in Riverside County and usually do not warrant rabies PEP.

Bites from domestic dogs and cats do not typically require rabies PEP. The last naturally infected canine case in Riverside County occurred in 1967. However, each situation needs to be evaluated for potential risk factors, such as contact with a high risk animal.

Animal bites should be reported to the appropriate animal control agency.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POST EXPOSURE RABIES PROPHYLAXIS

- Rabies PEP is a series of four vaccinations (five injections are recommended for immune compromised patients) along with rabies immune globulin (RIG) which should be given within the first seven days post-exposure. The first dose of the 4-dose rabies vaccine regimen should be administered as soon as possible (day 0) after exposure. Remaining doses are administered on days 3, 7, and 14.

Providing prompt wound care in addition to PEP is highly effective in preventing rabies among previously unvaccinated, immunocompetent persons.

ACIP recommendations for rabies PEP are located at:

<http://www.cdc.gov/rabies/resources/aciprecommendations.html>.

- Clinicians are encouraged to consult with the Department of Public Health for questions on rabies PEP.
- Contact Disease Control during business hours at 951-358-5107; after-hours contact Public Health Second Call Duty Officer at 951-782-2974.

RIVERSIDE COUNTY ANIMAL SERVICES

Blythe Animal Shelter - (760) 921-7857
245 S. Carlton, Blythe, CA 92225

Coachella Valley Animal Campus - (760) 343-3644
72-050 Pet Land Place, Thousand Palms, CA 92276

San Jacinto Valley Animal Campus - (951) 358-7387
581 S. Grand Avenue, San Jacinto, CA 92582

Western Riverside County/City Animal Shelter - (951) 358-7387
6851 Van Buren Boulevard, Jurupa Valley, CA 92509