

ADVISORY: Changes to Rabies Post-Exposure Prophylaxis Rabies Vaccine Administration Schedule

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Peterborough County-City
HEALTH UNIT
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To all Healthcare Providers in Peterborough City and County:

Please be advised that the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) and the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) released the new Canadian Immunization Guide (CIG) chapter on rabies last week. **This updated rabies chapter recommends a shortening of the schedule for post-exposure rabies vaccine for healthy individuals from 5 doses to 4, as follows:**

- For post-exposure prophylaxis of immunocompetent persons previously unimmunized with rabies vaccine, four 1.0 mL doses of Human Diploid Cell Vaccine (HDCV) or Purified Chick Embryo Cell Vaccine (PCECV) should be administered IM. The first dose of the four-dose course should be administered as soon as possible after exposure (day 0) based on the considerations discussed in the Management of the person after exposure to a potentially rabid animal section of the CIG Rabies Chapter. Additional doses should be administered on days 3, 7 and 14 after the first vaccination. The 5th dose on day 28 is no longer required. Recommendations for the use of Rabies Immune Globulin (Rablg) on day 0 remain unchanged.
- Previously unimmunized immunocompromised persons (including those taking corticosteroids or other immunosuppressive agents, and those who have immunosuppressive illnesses) and those taking chloroquine and other antimalarials, should continue to receive a five-dose vaccination regimen on days 0, 3, 7, 14 and 28 with one dose of Rablg on day 0.

Previously Unimmunized patient	Day 0	Day 3	Day 7	Day 14	Day 28	Rablg (on Day 0)
Immunocompetent	YES	YES	YES	YES	No	Yes (amount determined by weight)
immunocompromised	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	1 dose only

Effective immediately, immunocompetent individuals receiving rabies post-exposure prophylaxis in Ontario should be given vaccine according to the 4 dose administration schedule. These recommendations replace any previous recommendations in Ontario with regard to rabies vaccine post-exposure prophylaxis schedules. The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care's Guidelines for Management of Suspected Rabies Exposures document will be updated accordingly.

For additional information on the new NACI recommendations, please see the full text of the new CIG rabies chapter, available online at <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/publicat/cig-gci/p04-rabi-rage-eng.php>.

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