

ALERT: Confirmed Human Rabies Case in Ontario

September 9, 2024

Key Information:

- Brant County Health Unit has [publicly shared](#) a confirmed case of human rabies within their region;
 - First locally acquired case in Ontario since 1967
- When a case of human rabies was reported in British Columbia in 2019, PPH and Health Units saw a significant increase in suspect rabies exposures, eventually leading to a shortage of rabies immunoglobulin in Ontario
 - There is currently no shortage of immunoglobulin (if this happens, we will communicate with directions)
- Health care providers should continue to conduct risk assessments for potential exposures and consult with public health when necessary; PPH staff are on call 24/7 to support
- Current guidance for post-exposure prophylaxis is available [online from the Ministry of Health](#)

Situation:

On September 6th, 2024, the Brant County Health Unit publicly announced a confirmed human case of rabies within their region. The suspected exposure was from a bat in the Gowganda area of the Timiskaming region. Close contacts have been/are being followed up with, to be provided with post-exposure prophylaxis care. This is the first domestically acquired case of human rabies in Ontario since 1967. Peterborough Public Health (PPH) has identified multiple **bats** positive within our own region this year.

Please note that bat bites may not leave clear, visible marks and caution is needed. When a nearby human case is publicized, there may be an increased number of individuals seeking care or advice for potential exposures. **All suspect rabies exposures and potential clinical cases of rabies must be reported immediately** to PPH, using the appropriate [reporting form](#). During business hours (8:30am-4:30pm, M-F), reports can be faxed to 705-743-2897 or by phoning 705-743-1000. Outside of business hours, reports must be made by phoning 705-760-8127.

Post-Exposure Prophylaxis:

Guidance from the [Ministry of Health](#) for post-exposure prophylaxis should always be followed. Prophylaxis is recommended for anyone who has been:

- In close contact with someone who is a confirmed case of rabies; or
- Bitten, scratched or otherwise exposed via mucosal membrane to wild animals (racoons, skunks, foxes); or
- In direct skin contact with a bat when bite/scratch cannot be ruled out; or
- In direct contact with a bat and a bite, scratch, or saliva exposure into a wound/mucous membrane cannot be ruled out entirely*; and
- In other specified cases*.

**Some scenarios may be nuanced and require further considerations. PPH has trained staff who are available 24/7 to support exposure assessments.*

Currently, PPH distributes three rabies biologicals (listed below). These can be ordered from PPH during business hours, Monday to Friday, using the [order form](#).

- [KAMRAB Immunoglobulin](#)
- [Imovax \(rabies vaccine\)](#)
- [RabAvert \(rabies vaccine\)](#)

Health Care Professional Alerts from PPH:

PPH is transitioning all communication with HCPs to an email subscription using Mailchimp. As of October 1st, 2024, alerts will no longer be sent outside of Mailchimp. HCPs must [sign up online](#) to receive alerts on this system.