

Rabies Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP): What to Expect

Rabies is a fatal disease spread through the bite of a rabies-infected animal but can be prevented by rabies vaccinations. Receiving rabies vaccinations prior to having a rabies exposure is called pre-exposure prophylaxis, or PrEP†. The need for PrEP is determined by your risk of being exposed to rabies through your job, activities, or education. Your school, employer, or health care provider may recommend you receive the rabies pre-exposure vaccination series.

There are five risk categories based on the likelihood a person might have an unrecognized exposure to rabies.

RISK CATEGORY	WHO DOES THIS APPLY TO?
1	People who work with live viruses or perform rabies tests
2	People who handle bats, have contact with bats or bat environments, or perform necropsies that open the cranial cavity
3	Veterinary staff, animal control officers, wildlife rehabbers, and wildlife biologists
4	Same people as category 3, but the risk of rabies exposure lasts for no longer than 3 years (ex. a one-year internship)
5	The general public: these people do not need PrEP

What is rabies PrEP?

- Rabies PrEP includes two doses of rabies vaccine given seven days apart (Day 0 and 7)
- Depending on which risk category you fall into, you may need a 3rd dose or to have your antibody titer checked to complete PrEP.
 - Category 1 - Titers checked every 6 months: booster shot given if <0.5 IU/mL
 - Category 2 – Titer checked every 2 years: booster shot given if <0.5 IU/mL
 - Category 3 – Third vaccine dose given between Day 21 and Year 3 OR one-time titer check between Year 1 and Year 3.
 - Category 4 – No further actions

The Minnesota Department of Health does not pay for the cost of rabies PrEP. Speak with your provider and health insurance company about coverage. If you or your health care provider have any questions or concerns about PrEP or how it is being administered, call the Minnesota Department of Health at 651-201-5414. For more information about rabies in Minnesota, visit: health.mn.gov/diseases/rabies/rabies.html.

Please see the next page for a detailed schedule of PrEP for each risk category.

†Harmful side effects to rabies vaccine are not common. Minor reactions to rabies vaccines may include pain, redness, swelling or itching at the injection site. Rarely, symptoms such as headache, nausea, abdominal pain, muscle aches and dizziness have been reported.

Adapted with permission from the NYC Health Department

RABIES PRE-EXPOSURE PROPHYLAXIS(PREP): WHAT TO EXPECT

Risk Category 1: People who work with live viruses or perform rabies tests

Day 0 <i>The day you receive your first rabies vaccine is counted as day 0</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Rabies Vaccine #1 All doses of rabies vaccine should be injected into the deltoid muscle. Vaccine should never go in the gluteal muscles.
Day 7	<input type="checkbox"/> Rabies Vaccine #2
Every 6 months	<input type="checkbox"/> Titer check by the RFFIT* test

Risk Category 2: People who have contact with bats or bat environments, or perform necropsies that open the cranial cavity

Day 0 <i>The day you receive your first rabies vaccine is counted as day 0</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Rabies Vaccine #1 All doses of rabies vaccine should be injected into the deltoid muscle. Vaccine should never go in the gluteal muscles.
Day 7	<input type="checkbox"/> Rabies Vaccine #2
Every 2 years	<input type="checkbox"/> Titer check by the RFFIT* test

Risk Category 3: Veterinary staff, animal control, wildlife rehabbers, and wildlife biologists

Day 0 <i>The day you receive your first rabies vaccine is counted as day 0</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Rabies Vaccine #1 All doses of rabies vaccine should be injected into the deltoid muscle. Vaccine should never go in the gluteal muscles.
Day 7	<input type="checkbox"/> Rabies Vaccine #2
Day 21 – Year 3 Or Year 1 – Year 3	<input type="checkbox"/> Rabies Vaccine #3 <input type="checkbox"/> Titer check by the RFFIT* test

Risk Category 4: Same people as category 3, but the risk of rabies exposure lasts for no longer than 3 years (ex. a one-year internship)

Day 0 <i>The day you receive your first rabies vaccine is counted as day 0</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Rabies Vaccine #1 All doses of rabies vaccine should be injected into the deltoid muscle. Vaccine should never go in the gluteal muscles.
Day 7	<input type="checkbox"/> Rabies Vaccine #2

Immunocompromised Patients

Day 0 <i>The day you receive your first rabies vaccine is counted as day 0</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Rabies Vaccine #1 All doses of rabies vaccine should be injected in an arm muscle. Vaccine should never go in the gluteal muscle.
Day 7	<input type="checkbox"/> Rabies Vaccine #2
2-4 weeks later	<input type="checkbox"/> Titer check by the RFFIT* test

* The rapid fluorescent focus inhibition test (RFFIT) is the only recommended test for determining virus neutralizing antibody levels against the rabies virus. Other available titer tests (including the ELISA test) are not recommended for this purpose.