

## Rabies Post-Exposure Treatment (PET) - Summary Clinical Guideline

Reference No: CG-T/2015/218

### 1. Investigations and Risk Assessment

Prior to initiating PET, each case requires a full risk assessment based on the circumstances of the potential exposure.

It is important that a medical practitioner assesses all animal bites or scratches, especially:

- bat bites/scratches in the UK
- any other animal bite/scratch overseas

#### **Monday – Friday 8am – 5.30pm**

For initial advice or support in assessing the patient call Sheffield Virology Service on 0114 226 6477. If confirmed high risk/requiring PET contact the Rabies and Immunoglobulin Service (RIgS) at UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) to complete the risk assessment. Direct line - 0330 128 1020

#### **Weekends and bank holidays and after 5.30pm**

Outside RIgS working hours, the risk assessment can be completed online.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rabies-post-exposure-risk-assessment-form-and-calendar>.

This should then be emailed to: RIGS@ukhsa.gov.uk

Clinician advice is available if required via the Colindale Duty Doctor. Although treatment should be started promptly, initiating rabies PET is not a medical emergency, and can often wait until the next day, with the exception of antitoxin, or a previously untreated head and neck exposure which is classified as a “RED” using the composite rabies risk (see full clinical guideline), so callers after 5:30pm will be encouraged to call back the next day.

**If there is a possible case of *clinical rabies* - all calls should be referred to one of the RIgS consultants, UKHSA Colindale (0330 128 1020), or out of hours to Colindale Duty Doctor (0208 200 4400)**

For further information, refer to UKHSA guidelines (updated January 2023)

[Rabies post-exposure treatment: management guidelines - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

### 2. Supply of rabies vaccine +/- human rabies immunoglobulin (HRIG)

The responsibility for arranging administration of vaccine and/or immunoglobulin lies with the requesting clinician.

## **Rabies vaccine**

The rabies vaccine is kept in stock in pharmacy at both RDH and QHB for post exposure treatment. If RIgS advise via telephone (or out of hours via the online Risk Assessment form) that rabies vaccine is needed the prescriber should contact the pharmacist. Please see the contact details below for the best way to contact pharmacy for supply. The pharmacist will ask you to complete the prescription proforma (Appendix 1 in full clinical guideline) and send to pharmacy along with a printed copy of the online risk assessment that indicates the vaccine is needed.

Pharmacy will then supply the first dose of vaccine. Out of hours the vaccine can be obtained from the Pharmacy Emergency Cupboard (PEC) at RDH or the Pharmacy Out Of Hours (POOH) cupboard at QHB once authorisation has been gained from the on-call pharmacist. Once obtained from the PEC, the on-call pharmacist will need to be contacted again to inform them of the batch number and expiry of the vaccine used.

At weekends or bank holidays the second dose may also need to be supplied. If the prescriber has not spoken to RIgS, the prescriber **MUST** email the risk assessment form to RIgS so that RIgS can arrange for further supplies to be made to the patient.

## **Human Rabies Immunoglobulin (HRIG)**

The HRIG is not kept in stock in pharmacy. If the risk assessment indicates that HRIG is needed then the Colindale Duty Doctor at RIgS should be contacted to arrange a supply. They will ask for the pharmacy contact numbers below. Please also complete the form in Appendix 1 in the full clinical guideline and send to pharmacy.

If HRIG is required, it should be given within 7 days of exposure at a dose 20 units/kg for all patients including children. The volume to be given will vary according to the potency of the current batch, so this will need to be confirmed when obtaining it.

## **Pharmacy Contact Numbers**

RDH Monday - Friday 9am - 9pm - Dispensary Pharmacist ext 85361

QHB Monday - Friday 9am - 5pm - Dispensary pharmacist ext 5182

RDH and QHB outside of these hours - Out of hours pharmacist for each site via switchboard

NOTE to pharmacy: For information on issuing rabies vaccine and rabies immunoglobulin, please see the procedure on QPulse.

## **Administration of rabies vaccine and HRIG**

Link to guidance on how to administer the vaccine and rabies immunoglobulin: [Rabies: administration of vaccine and immunoglobulin - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/428222/rabies-administration-of-vaccine-and-immunoglobulin.pdf)

### 3. References

UKHSA (May 2023) Rabies: the green book, chapter 27 [online]. Accessed on 16/06/2023. Available from: [Rabies: the green book, chapter 27 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rabies-the-green-book-chapter-27)

UKHSA (January 2023) Guidelines on managing rabies post-exposure (January 2023). Accessed on 16/06/2023. Available from: [Guidelines on managing rabies post-exposure \(January 2023\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/publications/guidelines-on-managing-rabies-post-exposure-january-2023)

UKHSA (August 2022) Rabies: administration of vaccine and immunoglobulin. Accessed on 16/06/2023. Available from: [Rabies: administration of vaccine and immunoglobulin - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rabies-administration-of-vaccine-and-immunoglobulin)

### 4. Documentation Controls

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<b>Development of Guideline:</b> Maisie-Jane Fry, Kayleigh Lehal <b>Job Title:</b> Specialist OPAT Pharmacist, Lead Antimicrobial Pharmacist				
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