

MEDICAL SURVEILLANCE - RABIES

INTRODUCTION

The rabies surveillance program is a program to ensure that employees (staff, faculty, post-doctoral scholars) working with potentially rabid animals or their tissues are assessed for risk of contact with the rabies virus and provided with immunization and that ongoing titre monitoring is done to ensure protective immunity status is maintained.

SCOPE

This module applies to all employees who, based on their work or research activities are deemed to have a potentially higher risk of contact with rabid animals or their tissues (e.g. animal laboratory workers, agricultural technicians, veterinarians, researchers, animal control and wildlife workers), and who do not have immunity to the rabies virus.

LEGISLATION AND STANDARDS

[Canadian Immunization Guide, Part 4, Active Vaccines, Rabies Vaccine](#)

[University of Guelph Medical Directive, Rabies Vaccination](#)

[OVC SOP Number ADM 31 2011](#)

CRITERIA

Pre-exposure prophylaxis consists of a 3-dose vaccine series given over a 3-week period, the timing of which is critical for development of immunity. One month following completion of the vaccine series, blood will be drawn to ensure antibodies against rabies have developed to an acceptable level of greater than 0.5 IU/ml.

The duration of protection from the rabies vaccine varies from person to person. As per the Public Health Agency of Canada's Canadian Immunization Guide, Part 4, Active Vaccines (2012) it is recommended that those who have received the vaccine have rabies antibody levels measured every two years. If antibody levels fall below an acceptable concentration (less than 1.5 IU/mL) a booster dose of the vaccine will be required and a follow-up antibody titre will be done to ensure adequate protection.

METHODS/PROCEDURES

Vaccines are stored under refrigeration in Occupational Health and Wellness. Costs for the vaccine are borne by the department, and employees needing either the primary series or a booster dose will be asked to bring a billing code from their department for payment.

Informed Consent including a questionnaire is obtained prior to administering the vaccine. Following the administration of the vaccine, the individual must wait in Occupational Health and Wellness for a period of fifteen minutes. Reportable reactions will be reported to Public Health using the appropriate form, “Report of Adverse Event Following Immunization (AEFI)”.

RESPONSIBILITIES

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH PHYSICIAN

- Provide medical consultation following University procedures for injury/incident reporting and exposure management as required.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS (OHW)

- Review medical rabies titre levels of non-student personnel identified as meeting the aforementioned criteria and conduct further medical assessments as necessary.
- Arrange biennial rabies surveillance clinic.
- Receive and maintain records according to standard medical practice.
- Maintain a list of University personnel who meet the criteria for rabies medical surveillance. Communicate list to supervisors prior to biennial clinic and request updates to the list.
- Follow up with individuals with borderline or insufficient titres. Will recommend workplace accommodation as required.
- Conduct follow up post exposure.
- Provide guidance regarding the program.

SUPERVISORS

- Notify Occupational Health and Wellness of the names of all personnel whom they supervise who are to be involved in the rabies surveillance program; during biennial testing notification and whenever they have new hires.
- Cover the costs associated with any examinations, testing, and vaccinations.
- Follow up with staff who they have been notified have borderline or insufficient titres.
- Arrange workplace accommodation as required.

UNIVERSITY PERSONNEL REQUIRING RABIES SURVEILLANCE

- Attend biennial testing as per the program.
- Follow recommendations from Occupational health and Wellness for additional testing and/or vaccination in order to maintain a protective titre.
- Report any suspected exposure incidents as per University incident reporting procedures and obtain appropriate medical care as required.

INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

All incidents shall be reported using the University's incident reporting process.

OHW and the Occupational Health Physician are available for consultation for employees that have had a suspected exposure and/or incident to a known or suspected rabid animal or their tissues.

RECORDS MAINTENANCE

All personal medical records are maintained confidentially according to accepted medical practice by Occupational Health and Wellness.