

UW-Madison Rabies Vaccination Policy

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Next Review: June 2019

Functional Owner	UHS Executive Director Sarah Van Orman, MD, MMM
Executive Sponsor	Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration
Policy Contact	UHS Director of Environmental & Occupational Health Jim Morrison, MS, CIH, jmmorrison@uhs.wisc.edu

Policy Summary

To provide pre-exposure vaccine recommendations for UW-Madison faculty, students, and staff who may be exposed to the rabies virus in the course of their employment or coursework.

Who This Policy Applies To

The UW Environmental & Occupational Health policy strongly recommends pre-exposure vaccination for UW staff and students whose activities could potentially bring them into contact with rabies virus or with possibly rabid animals (including wild animals in Wisconsin). For staff at a high risk of exposure to rabies (such as veterinarians, animal handlers, and rabies laboratory workers) pre-exposure rabies vaccination is very strongly recommended.

Students participating in individual coursework that may result in contact with rabies virus or with possibly rabid animals (including wild animals in Wisconsin) must be informed about the risk of rabies exposure and how to obtain pre-exposure vaccination. Some of the schools (e.g. UW Madison School of Veterinary Medicine) very strongly recommend rabies vaccination.

Rationale

Animal researchers, animal handlers and personnel providing clinical veterinary medical services must be aware of the potential risks involved with the specific type of research that is being conducted and risks from animal health patients. Potential exposure to serious zoonotic diseases, such as rabies is monitored by the Wisconsin Division of Public Health.

Wild animals are the most common source of human rabies infection in the United States. Animals known to transmit rabies include bats, skunks, raccoons, dogs, cats, coyotes, foxes and other mammals.

Most exposures are described as an “animal bite exposure”—defined as having skin punctured or abraded by animal teeth or claws.

Other exposures may occur through “non-bite” pathways. A non-bite exposure is defined as having abraded skin, open wounds, eyes and mucous membranes contaminated with animal saliva or other potentially infectious materials (neural tissue, cerebrospinal fluid, salivary gland tissue). Exposure can result from direct contact with the material or from accidents involving sharps (needles, broken glass). In addition, aerosol exposures in laboratories and in caves with high numbers of bats are included as potential but poorly documented non-bite exposures.

Policy Detail

A. Pre-Exposure Initial

Pre-exposure vaccine for UW staff and students whose work activities could potentially bring them into contact with rabies virus or with possibly rabid animals (including wild animals in Wisconsin) shall be obtained through UHS Occupational Medicine.

- B. Pre-Exposure Ongoing
UW staff and students whose work activities continue to potentially bring them into contact with rabies virus or with possibly rabid animals (including wild animals in Wisconsin) and have received pre-exposure rabies vaccination shall have serologic testing (titer) conducted every 2 years. If indicated, booster dose shall be administered.
- C. Declination
It is highly recommended that individuals who are at risk and offered pre-exposure vaccination consult with the UHS Occupational Medicine staff prior to declining vaccination.
- D. Recordkeeping
Departments offering vaccination shall document that staff and students (where applicable) were informed of the risk and vaccine declination (see Supporting Tools)
- E. Post-Exposure
Immediately contact UHS Occupational Medicine, who can advise and coordinate appropriate medical response. If not on UW campus at time of exposure immediately seek treatment at the closest Emergency Room.
- F. Cost
Vaccinations for employees with occupational exposure to animals or tissues potentially infected with rabies shall be provided at no charge to the employee. Vaccinations for non-employees will be the responsibility of the individual.

Consequences for Non-Compliance

Rabies is a preventable viral infection that is transmitted when saliva (and less commonly tissue or nasal discharges) from a rabid animal is introduced into the human body by a bite (and less commonly scratch, or through exposure to the mucous membranes). The rabies infection is most often a fatal acute viral encephalomyelitis that is characterized by headache, fever, and sensory changes that progress into paralysis, delirium, convulsions, and death. There is no known effective treatment. The fatality rate of infected individuals is generally 100%

Supporting Tools

Rabies Vaccine Declination form (see below)

References

Human Rabies Prevention – United States 2008, Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) PHS <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5703a1.htm>

Compendium of Animal Rabies Control, 2003, National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians
<http://www.vaccines.gov/diseases/rabies/>

<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/vis/vis-statements/rabies.html>

Responsibilities

UHS Environmental & Occupational Health Unit- The UHS EOH Unit is responsible for developing the content and ongoing review of this policy.

UHS Occupational Medicine Program- The UHS Occupational Medicine Program is responsible for the medical content of this policy.

Supervisors- Supervisors are responsible for reviewing this policy with their employees and assuring implementation within their work unit.

Link to Related Policies

UW Madison Occupational Health Policy (accessed at: <link>)

Policy History

UHS Occupational Health Workgroup 12/18/14

UW Occupational Health Committee 1/20/15

Approved by EOH: 1/29/15

Revised:

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RABIES VACCINE DECLINATION FORM

Purpose: The purpose of this form is to provide written declination of the series of vaccinations of the rabies vaccine as prescribed by the University of Wisconsin Rabies Vaccine Policy. This completed form is legal documentation regarding a UW employee/student declination of this vaccine series.

Directions: Read the contents of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Rabies Vaccine Information Statement prior to your determination of whether to decline or receive the vaccination. If you would like to decline the series of vaccinations then you must completely fill out this form.

I (print name) _____ have had the opportunity to ask UHS Occupational Medicine provider (s) questions about the Rabies vaccine and such questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I may consult with UHS Occupational Medicine or my personal physician prior to declining this vaccine. I understand the following: 1) benefits and risks of rabies immunization; 2) a minimum of three doses of rabies vaccine are recommended for the vaccine to be fully effective as a preventive vaccine (no exposure); 3) there is no guarantee that a person immunized will become immune; and 4) side effects may be experienced from the vaccine

I understand that due to my occupation or class activity, I may be at risk of exposure to Rabies. I have been given the opportunity to be vaccinated with Rabies Vaccine. However, I decline Rabies vaccination at this time. I understand that by declining this vaccine, I continue to be at risk of acquiring Rabies, a serious disease and almost always fatal disease. If in the future I continue to have occupational exposure to blood or other potentially infectious materials and I want to be vaccinated with Rabies Vaccine, I can receive the vaccination series.

JOB TITLE (OR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM IF YOU ARE A STUDENT)

DEPT. _____

Birthdate _____

Phone # _____ Email _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Please keep a copy of this form for your records. Send a copy of this form to the UW Madison University Health Services-Occupational Medicine Department, 333 East Campus Mall