

Rabies Post Exposure Information

Liverpool School of
Tropical Medicine



What is Rabies?

Rabies is a virus infection spread through the saliva of infected **mammals including bats** and occurs in many countries around the world.

It causes inflammation of the brain and is nearly always fatal without appropriate treatment before symptoms develop.

What should I do if I get bitten, scratched or licked?

If you are bitten, scratched or licked over broken skin or around the face by a mammal, you should:

- Immediately wash the area for 15 minutes using running water with detergent and apply antiseptic
- If the animal's saliva has come in to contact with mucous membranes (i.e. eyes, nose or mouth), you should wash the area thoroughly with clean water as soon as possible.
- Gather as much information about the animal as possible
- **Seek urgent medical attention as you will always require a rabies risk assessment and may need treatment, even if you have previously received rabies vaccines. This will mean seeking advice whilst still abroad**
- Still seek medical advice immediately on return, even if the exposure was weeks before, to ensure necessary treatment has been completed.

Even if you **have** previously completed a pre exposure course of rabies vaccine you still require post exposure vaccines.

If you have **not** previously completed a pre exposure course of rabies vaccine; **or you are immunocompromised**, you may require rabies immunoglobulin and a full course of post exposure rabies vaccines over a number of weeks

Your travel insurance provider may be able to offer emergency medical advice please contact them directly for further information.

On return to England, you should contact your GP or urgent care service with the details of your exposure and information about any treatment received abroad. Your healthcare provider should then contact UKHSA (formerly Public Health England) by calling the rabies team on **Tel: 0330 128 1020**. Out of hours duty doctor Tel: 0208 200 4400.

If you live in the South of England the Hospital of Tropical Diseases offer an emergency walk in service [HTD - Emergency Walk In Clinic](#).

If you live in Wales contact Public Health Wales Tel: 0300 003 0032,

Scotland: Contact your GP who will contact the hospital infectious disease doctor on call.

Post exposure treatment is an NHS service available at Well Travelled Clinics by prior arrangement. 0151 705 3223

Useful contacts & resources:

<https://www.welltravelledclinics.co.uk/post-travel/post-exposure-rabies> Well Travelled Clinic: Rabies Post Exposure information page.
Telephone: 0151 705 3223 email tropshop@lstm.ac.uk (office hours only)

<https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/disease/148/rabies>

For country specific and general travel health advice.

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

<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/rabies>
World Health Organisation information page.