

antiseptics such as povidone iodine. This will remove or kill the rabies virus in case one is exposed to it.

- Seek for post-exposure vaccination to build proper immunity in case of infection. This should be started within 8 hours of the dog bite.
- Adhere to the doctor's directions on vaccination regime.
- Those who are at risk of being bitten by dogs and cats such as animal handlers and animal health professionals, need pre-exposure vaccination every 3 years.

Handling suspected cases of rabies

- Human and animal cases of rabies cannot be treated once symptoms are seen. This mostly ends in death.
- All suspected cases of rabies must be reported to health or veterinary authorities immediately.
- All suspected rabies cases must be isolated with minimal handling until the authorities arrive.
- All cases must be handled with appropriate personal protective equipment such as gloves.
- All animals suspected to be rabid must be humanely put to sleep/euthanized to prevent further spread.
- Health and veterinary authorities must submit the heads of animals suspected to be rabid to the lab for definitive diagnosis and public health action to prevent more rabies cases

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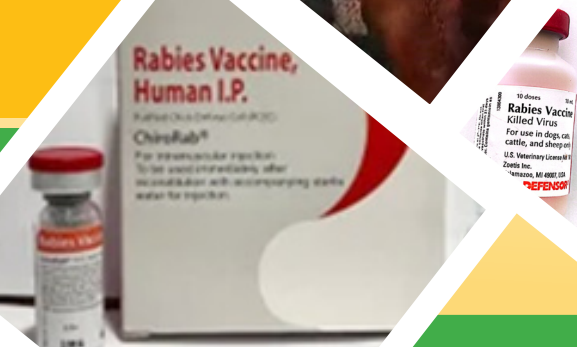
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RABIES: PREVENTION AND CONTROL



Introduction

Zoonotic diseases are illnesses that infect animals and humans. Rabies is one of the zoonotic diseases that is 100% preventable. In Kenya, an estimated 2,000 people die annually of rabies due to bites from rabid dogs.

What is rabies?

Rabies is a viral disease mostly transmitted through the bite of an animal suffering from rabies (rabid animal). Once infected, the rabies virus infects the nerves and the nervous system of mammals. The virus finally gets to the brain causing the commonly noticed symptoms of the disease and death. The most common cases of rabies in Kenya are dog-mediated/transmitted rabies. There are rare cases from wildlife and bats.

How is rabies transmitted?

Rabies virus is transmitted through direct contact mainly through broken skin or mucous membranes in the eyes, nose, or mouth with saliva or brain/nervous system tissue from an infected animal. Cats, dogs, cattle, sheep, goats, donkeys and horses can get rabies.



A rabid local dog breed exhibiting drooling

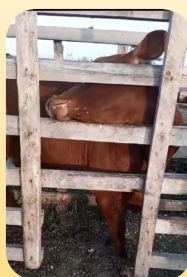
How does rabies present?

It is difficult to tell if an animal has rabies by just looking at it. The only sure way to know if an animal (or a person) has rabies is to perform laboratory testing. Animals with rabies may act strangely.

- Some may be aggressive and try to bite people or other animals may drool (salivate) more than normal. This is known as **furious** form of rabies.
- Other animals may act timid or shy, move slowly or act tame, or let people get close to them. This is known as **dumb** form of rabies. This may even happen with wild animals who may become too friendly.

Common signs and symptoms of rabies in animals

- General sickness
- Problems swallowing
- Excessive drool or saliva
- An overly aggressive animal
- An animal that bites at imaginary objects (sometimes called “fly biting”)
- An animal that appears tamer than expected.
- An animal that’s having trouble moving or may even be paralyzed.
- A bat that is on the ground and unable to fly



A cow exhibiting symptoms of rabies - frothing due to uncontrollable chewing caused by central nervous system symptoms and biting on wood.



How can rabies be prevented in animals?

Rabies is 100% preventable using vaccination. In Kenya, dogs and cats should be vaccinated every year.

Responsible keeping of dogs and cats is also advocated for in preventing rabies.

- Keeping dogs and cats away from wild animals
- Neutering dogs and cats to avoid roaming and possibility of disease spread.
- Controlling stray animals from your neighborhood through the relevant authorities.
- Housing and feeding dogs and cats well to reduce the chances of roaming.
- Keeping livestock in enclosures away from animal bites
- Vaccinating animals such as donkeys and horses against rabies
- Attend public vaccination campaigns against rabies.



Sample animal rabies vaccine



Sample human rabies vaccine

How to handle dog bites

When bitten by a dog, whether vaccinated or not:

- Thoroughly wash and flush the wound for at least 15 minutes with soap and water, or