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# Immunization : Rabies Vaccine

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This fact sheet provides basic information only. It must not take the place of medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Always talk to a healthcare professional about any health concerns you have, and before you make any changes to your diet, lifestyle or treatment.

Rabies vaccine protects people after they have been licked, bitten or scratched by an animal with rabies.

## What is rabies?

Rabies is a very serious disease. It can kill a person who is not treated after contact with an animal that has rabies. The disease can cause confusion, breathing problems and seizures. These signs may not show up for two to eight weeks. By then, there is no cure and the person will die.

## Does the rabies vaccine protect you against rabies?

Yes. The vaccine will protect you if you get all of your needles. Usually five needles are given over a month. These needles are given in the arm.

## Who should get the rabies vaccine?

Anyone who has been bitten, scratched or licked on an open wound or sore by an animal suspected of having rabies should get this vaccine.

## When should the rabies vaccine be given?

The vaccine should be given as soon as possible to everyone who has had contact with the animal. This includes pregnant women and infants.

## Is the rabies vaccine safe?

Yes. Some people have mild pain, swelling, redness or itching for a few days where the needle was given. A few people may have headaches, loss of appetite, stomach pain, muscle aches or dizziness. Serious side effects are rare. **You should always discuss the benefits and risks of any vaccine with your doctor.**

## When should I call my doctor?

Call your doctor if any of these symptoms happen within three weeks after being vaccinated :

- hives;
- vomiting;
- high fever;
- convulsions or seizures;
- any other serious health problem.

## Who should not get this the rabies vaccine?

Everyone should get this vaccine if there is a risk of getting rabies.

## Who should I talk to if I have any questions about this vaccine?

Talk to your doctor or call your local public health unit for more information.

## **Your record of protection**

After you or your child get any immunization, make sure your doctor updates your personal immunization record, such as your "Yellow Card". Keep it in a safe place !

## **Government of Ontario**

For information about health services and resources :

[www.health.gov.on.ca](http://www.health.gov.on.ca)

For consumer-friendly health tips and information :

[www.HealthyOntario.com](http://www.HealthyOntario.com)

INFOline: 1-877-234-4343;

TTY: 1-800-387-5559

Telehealth Ontario:

1-866-797-0000; TTY 1-866-797-0007

INFOline is open during business hours and can provide general information on healthcare.

Telehealth Ontario is a 24/7 service which uses nurse practitioners to answer your immediate health concerns.