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# Animal Bites and Rabies Risk: A Guide for Health Professionals

## RPEP overview

The rabies RPEP regimen involves administration of human rabies immune globulin (HRIG), which is given only once, and a series of four 1.0 ml rabies vaccinations. HRIG and the first vaccination are given on the first day of treatment (designated day 0) and three additional rabies vaccinations are given on days 3, 7, and 14.

Immunocompromised persons receive a fifth vaccination on day 28, and should be tested for seroconversion 7 to 14 days following completion of the PEP regimen.

Patients who have previously received either pre or post-exposure rabies prophylaxis should receive only two rabies vaccine boosters following an exposure, given on days 0 and 3. **Patients who have been previously vaccinated SHOULD NOT receive HRIG**, even if the pre or post-exposure rabies prophylaxis regimen was given many years prior.

## Human rabies immune globulin (HRIG)

Human rabies immune globulin (HRIG) provides rapid passive immune protection with a half life of approximately 21 days. It is given only once, on the first day of the PEP regimen (designated day 0). No more than the recommended dosage of HRIG should be given because excessive HRIG can partially suppress active production of antibody. If the HRIG was not administered on day 0, it may be administered up to and including day 7 of the PEP regimen. Beyond day 7, HRIG is not indicated, as the patient's antibody response to the vaccine occurs in that timeframe.

- The recommended dosage of HRIG is 20 IU/kg body weight for all ages including children.
- Infiltrate as much of the HRIG as possible into and around the bite wound.
- Administer the remaining HRIG intramuscularly (IM) at a site distant from the first vaccination site, generally in the quadriceps or deltoids.
- If there is no wound, such as following a bat-in-the-bedroom exposure, then HRIG may be given in the deltoids, quadriceps, or gluteals.

## Rabies vaccine

A 1.0 mL dose of rabies vaccine is given IM in the deltoid area of adults or the anterolateral thigh of young children on days 0, 3, 7, and 14 of the rabies PEP regimen. The first vaccination is given concurrently with the HRIG at a site distant from the HRIG. An additional fifth dose of

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