

## ***Animal Bite Injuries***

### ***Animal Bites are Common!***

Since January 2001, there have been 589 animal bites reported in Kelsey Trail Health Region. Many animal bites go unreported each year. A bite from an infected animal can transmit rabies.

### ***What is rabies?***

Rabies is a fatal viral infection of the nervous system. Rabies can be transmitted to humans in the saliva or blood of an infected animal, usually through a bite. It can also be spread if the animal's saliva enters an open cut or wound, or comes in contact with your eyes, mouth or nose.

### ***What kinds of animals can carry rabies?***

Rabies can occur in *any* warm-blooded animal. Most often, dogs, cats, foxes, raccoons, skunks, monkeys, wolves and bats get rabies. Also, animals like cattle, horses and deer can have rabies.

### ***What can I do to prevent an animal bite?***

- ✓ If an aggressive/strange dog approaches you, stand still. Kicking/screaming can escalate a dog's aggression. **Don't run** – it's natural for a dog to chase you.



### ✓ **Do not:**

- Leave children alone with a dog.
  - Disturb a dog caring for pups.
  - Stare an animal in the eye – it may want to fight.
  - Approach a strange dog.
  - Touch *any* hurt dog - even your own.
  - Take a dog's food or toys.
  - Startle a sleeping dog.
  - Tease, hurt or play rough with a dog
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- ✓ If a dog knocks you down, protect your face and neck! Roll onto your belly, face down, and curl into a ball with your hands behind your neck.
  - ✓ Try giving the dog your jacket, so the dog doesn't bite you.
  - ✓ Avoid all wild animals and report animals that are acting strangely.

### ***What do I do if an animal bites me?***

- **Wash the area thoroughly with soap and water.**
- **Seek medical attention immediately.**
- **Report the incident to Public Health so that your risk of acquiring rabies can be monitored.**
- Make every attempt to locate the animal. If the animal cannot be found, you'll be offered the rabies immune globulin and vaccine.

### ***Is there treatment for rabies?***

**Yes, but it is very important to act quickly** if you believe you have been exposed to rabies. Treatment for rabies is effective, but only if you begin treatment early.

### ***What do I need to do as an animal owner?***

- Have your pets vaccinated against rabies. You will still need to report a bite to Public Health, as not all animals develop protection from the rabies vaccine.
- Do not let your pet run loose.
- If your pet is involved in a bite, Public Health will request you **confine and monitor** your animal for ten (10) days. **If any changes are observed in your animal's health or behavior, call your veterinarian and notify Public Health.**
- In most cases, destroying the animal will not be required. If *you* insist on doing so, **do not destroy the animal's brain**. Do *not* shoot the animal in the head, as an intact brain sample is required for rabies testing. The **animal/head should be refrigerated** until Public Health arranges for pick-up. Or, take your animal to your veterinarian to be put down.
- If the animal cannot be observed for 10 days, or if the animal's brain cannot be tested, the victim will be offered the rabies immune globulin and vaccine (6 injections).



For further information contact your local Public Health Office or view the following websites:

**Tisdale** 873-8282

**Nipawin** 862-0761

**Kelvington** 327-4723

**Hudson Bay** 865-2634

**Melfort** 752-6310

**Cumberland House** 888-2244

#### ***Animal Health Fact Sheet***

<http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/animal/easan/disemala/rabrag/rabrage.shtml>

#### ***Travel Medicine Program***

[http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/pphb-dgspsp/tmp-pmv/info/rage\\_e.html](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/pphb-dgspsp/tmp-pmv/info/rage_e.html)

#### ***Canada Safety Council***

[www.safety-council.org](http://www.safety-council.org)

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