

# Rabies



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مركز الأمراض الإنتقالية  
Communicable Disease Center

عضو في مؤسسة حمد الطبية  
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## Introduction

Rabies is an acute viral infection that causes inflammation of the spinal cord and the brain. Transmission can occur via:

- The saliva of an infected mammal – introduced by a bite, scratch, or lick of broken skin/mucous membrane (cannot be transmitted through intact skin.)
- Aerosol spread is rare but may occur in bat caves.
- Very rarely, the disease spreads through body fluids and transplant tissues.

**The Illness** The incubation period for the disease is usually between 20–60 days but may range from 5 days to 1 year in some cases.

The virus causes headache, fever, general weakness and numbness or tingling around the wound site. The disease progresses to muscle spasms, hydrophobia (fear of water) and convulsions. Death is the usual outcome.

## Treatment

There is no effective treatment for rabies once clinical signs develop.

## Prevention

It is important to seek medical advice post exposure even if pre travel vaccine was administered.

Prevention of the disease can be achieved by:

- Pre-exposure prophylaxis ( rabies vaccine ) vaccination is recommended for all travelers who will be living or travelling in endemic areas and

who may be exposed to rabies because of their travel activities i.e. trekking, working or living in rural areas, those working in animal quarantine centers and customs officers.

- Post exposure prophylaxis including:
  - Local treatment of the wound, initiated as soon as possible after exposure; by washing it thoroughly with soap and water.
  - A course of potent and effective rabies vaccine
  - The administration of Rabies Immunoglobulin (RIG), if indicated

## Vaccination

- Pre-exposure vaccine is given in 3 doses at 0,3,7 days.
- Post exposure vaccines, if pre-exposure vaccine was not given, consist of 5 dose at 0, 3,7,14 and 28 days.

## Recommendations to Travellers

- Any animal contact in a rabies endemic area poses a potential risk of infection.
- All travelers are advised to avoid contact with animals (both wild and domestic), particularly dogs and cats.
- Children are more vulnerable to rabies than adults.
- All travelers to endemic areas should be aware of immediate wound care and advised to seek medical attention immediately

The vaccine is available at the travel clinic at the communicable disease center