

HALTON REGION PUBLIC HEALTH • Office of the Medical Officer of Health

TEL: 905-825-6000 • TOLL FREE: 1-866-442-5866 • FAX: 905-825-1444

TO: Halton Physicians, Nurse Practitioners, Emergency Departments, other Healthcare Providers

FROM: Dr. Patrick Galange, Associate Medical Officer of Health

DATE: August 20, 2025

RE: Rabies immunoglobulin shortage; only administer in consultation with Public Health

QUICK FACTS

- There is a provincial shortage of rabies vaccine and rabies immunoglobulin (RIG).
- Rabies post-exposure prophylaxis (rPEP) should be provided only when indicated, based on provincial guidance and in consultation with Halton Region Public Health.
- If you have patients potentially exposed to rabies, it's essential that you work with Public Health for a thorough risk assessment **prior** to initiating rabies post-exposure prophylaxis, using the [Management of Potential Rabies Exposures Guideline](#).
- Call 311 AND fax a completed [Rabies Exposure Reporting Form](#) to 905-825-8797 for a rabies consultation to **review risk assessments before initiating rPEP**.

KEY MESSAGES FOR HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS

- Risk assessments should consider:
 - Animal species, behaviour and health status
 - Nature of exposure (e.g., direct contact, bite, scratch or mucous membrane exposure)
 - Circumstances of exposure (provoked vs. unprovoked)
 - Location of wound (e.g., wounds on head, neck or hands are higher risk)
 - Availability of the animal for observation or testing
- When exposure risk is low, rPEP may not be indicated in some cases (e.g., a bat in the bedroom of a healthy adult with no known direct bat contact and no evidence of bite/scratch; a provoked bite from healthy, observable domestic dogs/cats with no signs of rabies after 10-day observation)
- For guidance on managing international rabies exposures (such as a patient exposed abroad and rabies post-exposure prophylaxis started outside Canada), refer to the PHO technical brief titled "[Management of Rabies Post-exposure Prophylaxis and Assessment of Vaccine Series Initiated Outside of Canada](#)."

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Rabies – Communicable Diseases Information for Physicians](#), Halton Region Public Health
- [Rabies Information for Halton Residents](#), Halton Region Public Health
- Video "[Administering Rabies Post Exposure Prophylaxis](#)"

Please report all suspected/confirmed cases of [Diseases of Public Health Significance](#) to Public Health immediately by calling 311, 905-825-6000 or toll free at 1-866-442-5866.

Ministry of Health

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August 15, 2025

MEMORANDUM

**TO: Public Health Unit Rabies Program Managers and Vaccine Preventable
Disease Managers**

FROM: Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health

RE: Rabies Vaccine and Immunoglobulin Supply

Dear Colleagues,

Ontario is currently experiencing a shortage of rabies vaccines (i.e., Imovax-Rabies and Rabavert) and rabies immunoglobulins (i.e., HyperRAB and KamRAB). Corresponding Product Alternate IDs are # P657132260, 657132250, and 657132310. Discussions with federal partners are ongoing to secure additional supply and alleviate pressures as soon as possible.

In the interim, current back orders for rabies vaccines and rabies immunoglobulins will be cancelled on Panorama. For any urgent product needs starting today, August 15, please submit a new order under the existing pre-approval process to the Vaccine Supply and Logistics Unit (vaccinesupplyandlogistics@ontario.ca) for review before submitting the request on Panorama. Depending on demand, not all order requests may be processed. Once the supply shortage is resolved, the Ontario Government Pharmaceutical and Medical Supply Service (OGPMSS) will send out a Jurisdictional Notice via Panorama to indicate when normal ordering may resume.

We are advising public health partners to adhere to inventory best practices:

- Use your current rabies vaccine supply judiciously and only order more product when it is essential.
- When the attending physician's risk assessment is not consistent with the public health unit's assessment, the health unit should make all reasonable efforts to seek agreement.
- Limit the pre-positioning of additional doses at external sites to enable closer oversight of available supply in the province during this time.
- Do not order more than two (2) weeks' worth of supply to help maintain access to supply for other public health units.
- Ensure administration is aligned with [provincial guidance](#) and the [exposure algorithm](#).
- Please notify health care practitioners in your area of the rabies vaccine and rabies immunoglobulin shortage and share a copy of this memo, if appropriate.
- Minimize wastage of rabies vaccine and rabies immunoglobulin in your current stock by ensuring that short-dated products are utilized before dispensing those with longer expiry dates.

For your awareness, the Ministry of Health monitors the number of rabies tests submitted to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency laboratory on a daily basis. Compared to this time last year, the **percent test positivity for bats is down**. Increases in the total number of positive tests received by health units are a result of a doubling of test submissions compared to this time last year (2024). Public health units should only submit bats involved in human exposure cases through the Rabies Response Program. The Ministry of Natural Resources considers routine surveillance of bats (i.e., those not involved in human or animal exposure situations) unnecessary, knowing that the disease is endemic in bats in all regions of the province.

Your cooperation during this time is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,



Dr. Daniel Warshafsky, MD, MPH, CCFP (SEM), Dip Sport Med, FRCPC
Associate Chief Medical Officer of Health