

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: September 9, 2024

RE: Human Rabies Case in Ontario – CMOH Memo to Hospitals and Primary Care Providers

QUICK FACTS

- There has been a confirmed case of rabies in an Ontario resident. The Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health issued a [memo to all hospitals and primary care providers in Ontario](#). This marks the first domestically-acquired case of human rabies in Ontario since 1967.
- The individual is a resident of Brantford, and Brant County Health Unit issued the following announcement: [Brant County Health Unit Confirms Rabies Case in Brantford-Brant Resident - Brant County Health Unit \(bchu.org\)](#).
- Prompt assessment and appropriate administration of post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) following a suspected rabies exposure is critical because once symptoms develop, rabies is almost always fatal.

KEY MESSAGES FOR HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS

- Continue to report all potential rabies exposures to Halton Region Public Health as required under the [Health Protection and Promotion Act](#). This includes cat and dog scratches/bites and contact with wildlife such as bats, raccoons, skunks and other mammals.
 - Call 311 **AND** fax a completed Rabies Exposure Reporting Form to 905-825-8797 – 24/7, 365 days a year.
- Upon receipt of a potential rabies exposure, a Public Health Inspector will investigate and assist the clinician in a risk assessment of the exposure and the need for rabies PEP. Guidance on whether a patient may require rabies PEP can be found in the [Management of Potential Rabies Exposures Guideline, 2020 \(gov.on.ca\)](#).
- Bites inflicted by bats may not be felt and may not leave behind any visible marks.
- The decision to administer PEP sits with the attending physician, in consultation with their patient.

KEY MESSAGE FOR PATIENTS

Patients with questions about rabies can visit Halton Region's [Bats and Rabies](#) webpage or call 311 and ask to speak to a Public Health Inspector.

Please report all suspected/confirmed cases of [Diseases of Public Health Significance](#) (only report COVID-19 cases occurring in high-risk settings) to Public Health immediately by calling 311, 905-825-6000 or toll free at 1-866-442-5866.

PLEASE PROVIDE A COPY TO ALL PHYSICIANS IN YOUR OFFICE AND/OR POST IN EMERGENCY DEPARTMENTS AND PHYSICIAN LOUNGES. IF YOU HAVE ANY ISSUES WITH THIS ATTACHMENT, PLEASE EMAIL DOCTORS@HALTON.CA.