

IF YOU'VE BEEN EXPOSED...

Don't panic! Immediately wash the wound with warm, soapy water. Consult a health care provider, and report the exposure to local Law Enforcement.

DO NOT put down the offending animal, especially by shooting it in the head.

Report the animal bite to the Health Department. A health official will advise you further on your options to monitor for rabies.

Rabies symptoms

- Unusual aggressiveness
- Unprovoked attacks
- Change in bark of dogs
- Staggering or erratic behavior
- Drooling or appearance of choking
- Tremors, lack of coordination, loss of balance
- Paralysis, respiratory failure

What is rabies quarantine?

Rabies quarantine is the physical isolation of an animal that has potentially exposed a person to rabies.

The quarantine period is 10 days.

You may be able to quarantine an animal in your home, provided that it is kept in secured confinement and ensure the animal can be readily observed for health changes.

You may be required to quarantine the animal at the local veterinarian. This decision is based on the discretion of local public health officials.

The animal must be monitored for any development of rabies symptoms.

The animal must be checked and cleared by a veterinarian at the end of the 10-day quarantine period.

If the animal develops symptoms consistent with rabies during the quarantine period, the animal may be ordered humanely destroyed to test for the rabies virus.

If the animal does not develop symptoms consistent with rabies during the quarantine period, it may be vaccinated for rabies if due and released from quarantine.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

My animal seems fine. Why do I have to quarantine?

Behavioral changes that could cause an animal to bite can be the first signs of rabies infection. Other apparent clinical signs of rabies infection may not develop for several days.

My animal is already vaccinated. Why do I have to quarantine?

Although a fully-vaccinated animal is unlikely to become infected with rabies, rare cases have been reported.

Will you put down my pet?

An animal may only be ordered humanely destroyed if it exhibits symptoms of rabies during quarantine.

Who incurs the cost of rabies follow-up?

The owner of the animal will incur the cost of any services provided by the local veterinarian.

How can I avoid rabies exposure?

Keep your animal leashed and under your control. Monitor small children around your animal. Do not play with wild or stray animals. Vaccinate your pets against rabies.

What is rabies?

Rabies is a deadly disease caused by a virus that attacks the nervous system. It kills almost any mammal or human that gets sick from it.

The rabies virus is mainly in the saliva and brain of a rabid animal. It can be transmitted through a bite or exposure to saliva or brain tissue.

A potential rabies exposure is any bite, defined as a penetration of the skin by the teeth, from an animal susceptible to rabies, or scratches, abrasions, or open wounds with bleeding within 24 hours, or mucous membranes, such as the eyes, contaminated with saliva or other potentially infectious material from an animal susceptible to rabies.

All animal bites
are reportable to
the Health
Department
according to
Montana law

RICHLAND COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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References

Montana Code Annotated,
37.114
Montana Code Annotated
37.114.571
Richland County Health Code,
Chapter 4

GUIDE TO ANIMAL BITES

An animal owners' guide to rabies prevention, handling animal bites, and quarantine procedures in Richland County, Montana

