

Date: Tuesday, June 01, 2021

To: Central Zone Emergency Department and Family Physicians; U of A Rural Family Medicine Program; Nurse Practitioners; Emergency Department Staff and Clinical Educator; Environmental Public Health (EPH); Public Health Nursing; Medical Affairs; Medical Director and Chief Zone Officer; Senior Operating Officers; Executive Directors (Red Deer and Community, Public Health, Addiction and Mental Health); Provincial CDC Intake; CDC Immunization.

From: Dr. Digby Horne, Medical Officer of Health – Central Zone

Subject: Initial Management of Animal Exposures to Prevent Rabies

Primary care and acute care, public health, patients, and animal owners must work collaboratively to prevent the occurrence of rabies. Public Health has developed three online resources to facilitate this, located at www.ahs.ca/czmoh website under the *Resources* tab (sub-heading *Animal Exposure Investigations*).

Using the [Animal Exposure Assessment Algorithm](#), clinical staff will be able to determine if the exposure requires notification of Public Health.

- Rabies can be transmitted to persons from the saliva of an infected mammal through a bite, scratch, or mucous membrane/wound exposure.
- Exposures involving healthy, normally behaving pets (dogs, cats, and ferrets) available for a 10 day observation period **do not** require notification of Public Health. The reason is that animals remaining healthy and behaving normally at 10 days did not have virus in their saliva at the time of the exposure.
- Other exposures **do require notification** of Public Health for coordination of observation, animal brain testing, and decisions about the need for rabies vaccine and immune globulin.

The [Animal Exposure Referral](#) form should be used to provide notification of Public Health.

Patients with exposures which do not require notification of Public Health should be provided with the [Patient Care Sheet: follow-up for domestic dog/cat/ferret exposure](#).

Thank you for your attention and assistance.