



Quarantine and Vaccine Requirements for Biting Dogs & Cats



Human deaths caused by rabies in the U.S. are rare, however globally death rates exceed 50,000 per year. The death rate is low in the U.S. due to collaborative efforts between public health officials, veterinarians, animal control officers, and law enforcement. These groups work together to assure thorough animal bite investigations are performed. It is important that people who are exposed to rabies receive timely rabies post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) to protect them from dying from this disease.

Important steps in an animal bite investigation involving dogs and cats include determination of quarantine requirements and the rabies vaccination status of the biting animal.

Quarantine of dogs and cats that bite humans:

- **Dogs and cats that bite a human should be placed in quarantine for 10 days and observed for clinical signs of rabies.** While in quarantine, if the animal shows signs of rabies or dies for any reason, Arkansas Department of Health zoonotic disease section should be contacted immediately at (501) 280-4136 and arrangements made for testing the animal for rabies at the Public Health Lab (PHL).
- **Dogs and cats can be home quarantined when:**
 - Bite victim is a direct family member of the animal's owner.
OR
 - Animal is current on its rabies vaccination as confirmed by a veterinarian, and the owner has ability to properly confine the animal.
 - A veterinarian may be required in some cases to provide certification of health before an animal is released from its 10-day quarantine.
- **Dogs and cats should be quarantined at a veterinarian's facility or a recognized animal control facility, if available, when:**
 - Animal is not current on rabies vaccination.
OR
 - Animal has never been vaccinated.
 - All overdue or non-vaccinated animals placed in quarantine should be rabies vaccinated at the end of the 10-day period prior to release.
- **Establishing an animal's rabies vaccine is current:**
 - **Current** is an animal immunized by a veterinarian and administered at the appropriate time intervals for the age of the animal and type of vaccine administered.
 - **Not current** is an animal that is overdue for a rabies booster, but the animal has veterinarian documentation of receiving a rabies vaccine at least once previously.
 - **Never been vaccinated** is an animal that has never received a rabies vaccination documented by a veterinarian. Rabies vaccines administered to dogs and cats that cannot be documented by a veterinarian, such as over-the-counter vaccines are considered non-vaccinated animals in animal bite investigations.

1. **Vaccinated animals: 10- day home quarantine.**
2. **Overdue or non- vaccinated animals: 10-day quarantine at veterinary facility or animal control facility.**
3. **Rabies vaccine status considered current: Confirmation by a veterinarian is required.**
4. **Rabies vaccine status unknown or unconfirmed by a veterinarian: Considered to be non- vaccinated.**
5. **Any animal that dies in quarantine: Should be tested for rabies at the ADH PHL.**



For more information call or visit us on the web:

Phone: 501-280-4136 <https://www.healthy.arkansas.gov/programs-services/topics/rabies>