

ONTARIO SPCA AND HUMANE SOCIETY

Ontario's animal charity since 1873.

Disease Name:	Rabies
Agent:	Rhabdoviridae, genus Lyssavirus
Clinical Signs:	<p>Animals - Two presentations of the disease: furious form or dumb/paralytic form. Furious form is characterized by aggression, disorientation, anxiety and roaming. Paralytic form is characterized by progressive paralysis, often starting with the throat muscles leading to the inability to swallow. Atypical presentation is possible, and rabies should be kept in mind as a differential for any abnormal behavior or neurological disease of unknown cause.</p> <p>Humans - Starts as flu-like symptoms (weakness, fatigue, lack of appetite, headache, fever). Many victims report tingling at the exposure site. Symptoms progress to hyperactivity, disorientation, hallucinations and convulsions. The disease slowly and painfully paralyzes its victims. At the final stage, they typically lapse into a coma and die from respiratory arrest.</p>
Susceptible domestic species	Most warm-blooded animals can be infected, including bats, skunks, raccoons, foxes and coyotes.
Zoonotic?	Yes
Diagnostic tests:	Virus is present in the saliva, diagnosis is by postmortem immunofluorescent antibody testing of the brain.
Vaccine available?	Yes
Vaccine efficacy	Vaccinated dogs and cats have been reported to develop rabies.
Excreted in :	Saliva, blood
Mode of transmission:	Bite or ingestion of an infected animal
Disinfection	<p>Saliva generally needs to enter the tissues for infection to occur, so a bite that breaks the skin is by far the most common means of transmission. May also be contracted through a scratch.</p> <p>Standard disinfectants effective</p>
Incubation	<p>Will show clinical signs within 10 days of the virus present in the saliva.</p> <p>Three weeks to three months, but can be as long as several years.</p>
Post recovery shedding	None
Carrier state?	No
Treatment	Once clinical signs have become apparent, rabies is virtually 100% fatal in humans
PPE required	Gloves, gown, goggles and/or full face mask, impermeable shoe covers, HAZMAT suit.