

February 18, 2013

To: Physicians in New Brunswick

Subject: New recommendations for rabies post exposure prophylaxis of immunocompetent persons previously unimmunized with rabies vaccine

Dear colleagues:

The Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health would like to inform you of a change in recommendations for rabies post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) of previously unimmunized individuals.

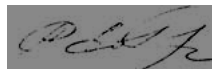
Previous recommendations for PEP included a dose of Rabies Immunoglobulin (RabIG) on day 0 as well as 5 doses of rabies vaccine, administered on days 0, 3, 7, 14 and 28. **The National Advisory Committee on Immunization now recommends a shortened 4 dose PEP vaccine schedule** for immunocompetent persons who are previously unimmunized with rabies vaccine. The first vaccine dose (1.0 ml IM) is administered as soon as possible after exposure (day 0), with one dose of RabIG (20 IU/kg body weight for all age groups) also given on day 0. Additional vaccine doses (1.0 ml IM) should be administered on days 3, 7 and 14 after the first vaccination.

Please note that PEP recommendations for previously unimmunized immunocompromised persons and those taking chloroquine and other antimalarials remains unchanged (i.e. five dose vaccination regimen with one dose of Rabig). Immunocompromised persons include those taking systemic corticosteroids (equivalent to ≥ 20 mg per day (≥ 2 mg/kg per day in children) of prednisone for ≥ 14 days) or other immunosuppressive agents, and those with immunosuppressive illnesses (e.g. congenital immunodeficiency, human immunodeficiency virus infection, leukemia, lymphoma, generalized malignancy).

Recommendations for PEP of persons previously immunized with rabies vaccine and for pre-exposure prophylaxis remain unchanged. For more information on this topic please consult the *Canadian Immunization Guide*. The latest version of this guide is now available online and will be updated in electronic format only. It is available at <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/publicat/cig-gci/p04-rabi-rage-eng.php>.

Thank you for your attention in this matter.

Sincerely,



Alexander Doroshenko, MD, MPH, FFPH (UK), FRCPC
Provincial Medical Officer of Health