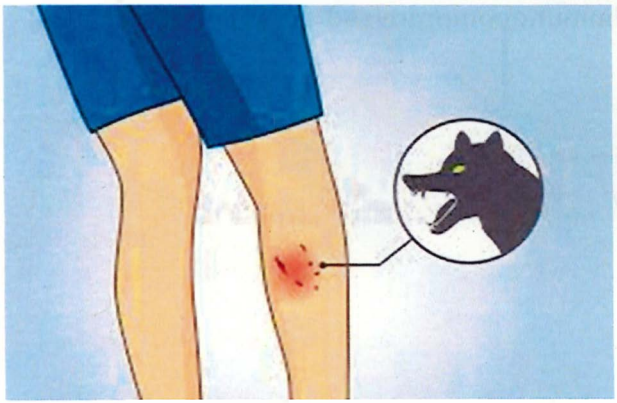
Responding

How to Respond to an Animal Bite

What should I do after an animal bite?

- **Clean the wound immediately, contact your physician** to see what they recommend.
- **Identify** where the animal lives or capture it safely if possible.
- If you were exposed to a bat while sleeping, you may have been exposed. Do not set it free. Capture it safely and contact your local health department for testing.
- If you need to consult with the KY State Public Health Veterinarian call:
- 502-682-4048



Preventing Animal Bites in the Future

- To avoid future animal bites **never try to pet a wild animal or any stray or unknown dogs, cats, or ferrets.**
- **Discuss the danger of rabies with your children** and help them understand why they should refrain from playing with wildlife or unknown animals.
- **Report any suspicious wildlife** that shows any signs of neurologic illness to a KY Fish and Wildlife Officer
- **Make sure your pets are up to date on their rabies vaccine.**

For more information visit:

- Rabies Post-exposure Prophylaxis | Rabies | CDC
- https://chfs.ky.gov/agencies/dph/dehp/idb/Pages/rabies.aspx

Kentucky Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Rev. 9.2025

I Got Bit, or at least I think I did. So now what?

Rabies Post-Exposure Prophylaxis

Getting bit by an animal can be scary, but current vaccines are safe and effective!

First, if the animal is available for testing or quarantine, shots may be avoided. Contact your local health department for coordination.

Treatment

Treatment for an Animal Bite to prevent Rabies

Disclaimer: These sections are not intended to provide medical advice, that should be obtained from your physician. They are only meant to provide an overview of the post-exposure prophylaxis protocol.

The post-exposure prophylaxis is composed of two types of injections, one of which you will receive only once, and the other you will receive four to five times based upon your immune function. **Follow the injection schedule timeline below.**

Rabies Vaccine:

What is it?

- The Rabies vaccine is safe and effective. Adverse reactions are unusual.

How many will I receive?

- Patients usually receive **four vaccines on days 0, 3, 7, and 14.** You may need more if you are were bit in another country or are immunocompromised.
- If previously vaccinated, get 2 vaccines on days 0 & 3 only

Where will I get the shot?

- Adults receive the vaccine in the **deltoid muscle** of the arm. Children will receive it in the deltoid or the thigh muscle.

HRIG:

What is it?

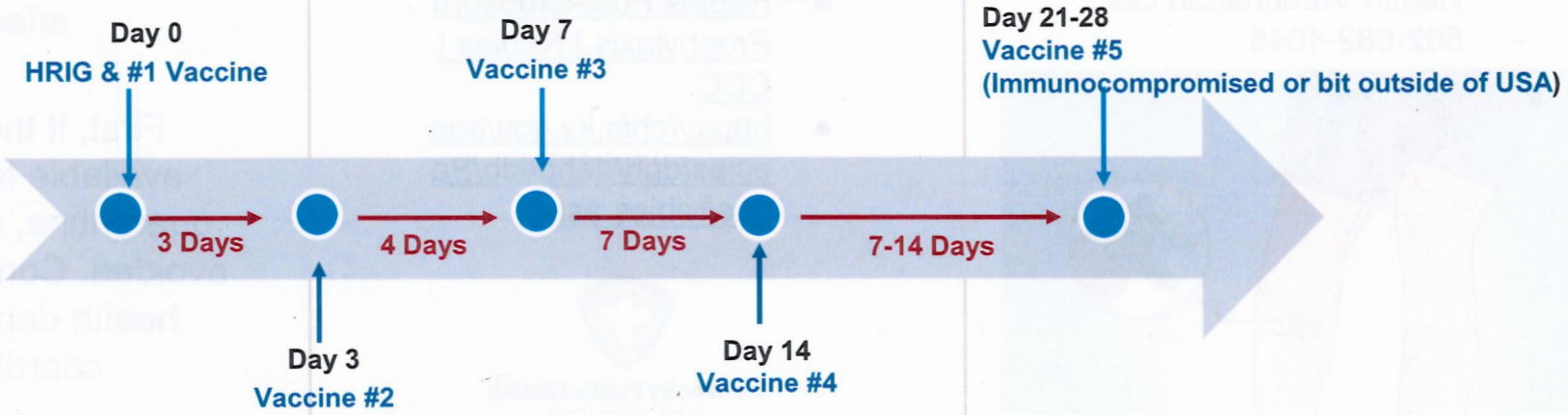
- **Human Rabies Immune Globulin,** gives your body immediate protective antibodies against rabies.

How many will I receive?

- This is given only once, when you start the series.
- If you have previously been vaccinated against rabies, DO NOT GET THE HRIG!

Where will I get the shot?

- The shot will be given around the bite wound or in a large muscle such as the thigh.

Injection Schedule

Intervals between shots are in RED!