
What is Rabies?

Rabies is a serious disease of the central nervous system, especially the brain. It is caused by a virus in the saliva of infected animals. The most common way to become infected is through a bite wound in which saliva containing the virus comes into contact with the blood of the animal or person bitten. It is also possible for the virus to spread through the mucous membranes (moist tissues found in the eye, nose and mouth).



Untreated rabies is deadly in humans.

If you come in contact with an animal you suspect has rabies:

- **Immediately report the incident to your local conservation officer**
- Wash the wound or exposed area with soap and water. Use plenty of water to flush the wound out.
- Go to your local health centre for medical attention.
- Remove any clothes that may have been in contact with the animal's saliva and wash them.

Can rabies be treated?

Yes. Even if you have been bitten by a rabid animal, you can get an antidote from a nurse or a doctor that will prevent you from getting rabies. It is crucial to get this treatment as soon as possible. Waiting too long can be deadly.

How can I protect myself from rabies?

- Learn to recognize a rabid animal and know who to call if you see one
- Avoid any animal you think might be rabid
- Avoid eating the meat from a rabid animal
- Avoid using the meat from a rabid animal to feed dogs
- Trappers should consider wearing thick rubber gloves while skinning animals and should get a pre-exposure vaccine. Animals that appear healthy could be infected.

If you must kill an animal you think has rabies, do not shoot it in the head, as the brain is needed for testing.

Avoid contact with any animal that is acting strangely and be extremely careful when handling your own pet if you suspect rabies.

What kinds of animals can get rabies?

All warm blooded animals can get rabies.

In Nunavut, rabies typically occurs in arctic foxes. It can also be found in dogs, red foxes, wolves, caribou and polar bears.

How do I prevent rabies from being spread?

- **Have your dogs or pets vaccinated.** A free vaccine is available in every community through the local By-Law office.
- **Do not let your dogs wander loose.** It may come in contact with a rabid animal without you knowing.
- If you frequently work with or handle animals, you should get vaccinated for rabies.
- Always wear gloves when handling an animal that has or you suspect has died from rabies

