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Rabies

Local Treatment of Wounds for Possible Exposure:

(1) Recommended in all exposures

(a) First-aid treatment

Since elimination of rabies virus at the site of infection by chemical or physical means (see section 9.2) is the most effective mechanism of protection, immediate washing and flushing with soap and water, detergent, or water alone is imperative (recommended procedure in all bite wounds including those unrelated to possible exposure to rabies). Then apply either 40-70% alcohol, tincture or aqueous solutions of iodine, or 0.1% quaternary ammonium compounds.¹

(b) Treatment by or under direction of a physician

(1) Treat as above (a) and then:

(2) apply antirabies serum by careful instillation in the depth of the wound and by infiltration around the wound;

(3) postpone suturing of wound; if suturing is necessary, use antiserum locally as stated above;

(4) where indicated, institute antitetanus procedures and administer antibiotics and drugs to control infections other than rabies.

B. Specific Systemic Treatment

Nature of Exposure	Status of biting animal Irrespective of previous vaccination		Recommended treatment
	At time of exposure	During 10 days ^a	
I. Contact, but no lesions; Indirect contact; no contact II. Licks of the skin; scratches or abrasions; minor bites (covered areas of arms, trunk, and legs)	Rabid	--	None
	(a) Suspected as rabid ^b	Healthy	Start vaccine. Stop treatment if animal remains healthy for 5 days ^{a,c}
	(b) Rabid: wild animal, ^d or animal unavailable for observation	Rabid	Start vaccine; administer serum upon positive diagnosis and complete the course of vaccine Serum + vaccine
III. Licks of mucosa; major bites (multiple or on face, head, finger, or neck)	Suspect ^b or rabid domestic or wild ^d animal, or animal unavailable for observation.		Serum + vaccine. Stop treatment if animal remains healthy for 5 days ^{a,c}

^a Observation period in this chart applies only to dogs and cats

^b All unprovoked bites in endemic areas should be considered suspect unless proved negative by laboratory examination (brain FA).

^c Or if its brain is found negative by FA examination (see 9.1).

^d In general, exposure to rodents and rabbits seldom, if ever, requires specific antirabies treatment.

¹Where soap has been used to clean wounds, all traces of it should be removed before the application of quaternary ammonium compounds because soap neutralizes the activity of such compounds.