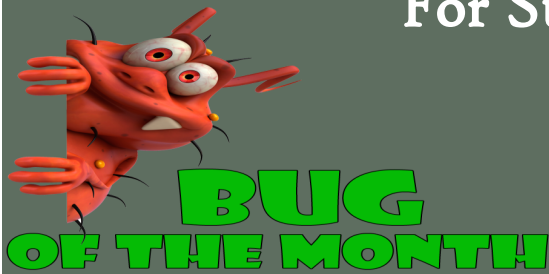


RABIES

October 2015



What is it?



- Rabies is a preventable viral disease of mammals most often transmitted through the bite of a rabid animal.
- The rabies virus infects the central nervous system, ultimately causing disease in the brain and death.
- The first symptoms of rabies may be very similar to those of the flu including general weakness or discomfort, fever, or headache. These symptoms may last for days.
- As the disease progresses, more specific symptoms appear and may include insomnia, anxiety, confusion, slight or partial paralysis, excitation, hallucinations, agitation, hypersalivation (increase in saliva), difficulty swallowing, and hydrophobia (fear of water). The acute period of disease typically ends after 2 to 10 days. Once clinical signs of rabies appear, the disease is nearly always fatal, and treatment is typically supportive. Death usually occurs within days of the onset of these symptoms.
- The most important global source of rabies in humans is from uncontrolled rabies in dogs. Children are often at greatest risk from rabies. They are more likely to be bitten by dogs, and are also more likely to be severely exposed through multiple bites in high-risk sites on the body. Severe exposures make it more difficult to prevent rabies unless access to good medical care is immediately available.

How is it spread?

- Transmission of rabies virus usually begins when infected saliva of a host is passed to an uninfected animal.
- The most common mode of rabies virus transmission is through the bite and virus-containing saliva of an infected host.
- Though transmission has been rarely documented via other routes such as contamination of mucous membranes (i.e., eyes, nose, mouth), aerosol transmission, and corneal and organ transplantations.

Where is it found?

- All species of mammals are susceptible to rabies virus infection, but only a few species are important as reservoirs for the disease.
- In the United States, distinct strains of rabies virus have been identified in raccoons, skunks, foxes, and coyotes.
- Several species of insectivorous bats are also reservoirs for strains of the rabies virus.

Prevention & Control:

For Animals

- Visit your veterinarian with your pet on a regular basis and keep rabies vaccinations up-to-date for all cats, ferrets, and dogs.
- Maintain control of your pets by keeping cats and ferrets indoors and keeping dogs under direct supervision.
- Spay or neuter your pets to help reduce the number of unwanted pets that may not be properly cared for or vaccinated regularly.
- Call animal control to remove all stray animals from your neighborhood since these animals may be unvaccinated or ill.

For People

- Disease prevention includes administration of both passive antibody, through an injection of human rabies immune globulin (HRIG) and a round of injections with rabies vaccine regardless of the interval between exposure and initiation of treatment. People who have been previously vaccinated or are receiving preexposure vaccination for rabies should receive only vaccine.
- Regardless of the risk of rabies, immediate gentle irrigation of bite wounds with water or a dilute water povidone-iodine solution has been shown to markedly decrease the risk of bacterial infection.
- Tetanus shot if you have not been immunized in ten years. Decisions regarding the use of antibiotics, and primary wound closure should be decided together with your doctor.

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Source:

<http://www.cdc.gov/rabies/index.html>



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