



Rabies Vaccinations are required by law. Municipalities throughout Canada generally have one required vaccination for rabies for all dogs and cats since it is so dangerous to animals and humans. The City of Winnipeg requires them to be done a minimum of every 3 years. Please consult with your vet to ensure your rabies vaccinations are kept up to date as required by law.

What is rabies?

Rabies is a viral infection that can be transmitted from animals to people. It is transmitted through saliva (spit) of an infected animal. The disease attacks the nervous system and eventually affects the brain. Once symptoms appear, rabies is almost always fatal.

How is rabies spread?

Rabies is spread through close contact with the saliva (spit) of infected animals. People are usually infected after a rabid animal bites them. Rabies can also be spread when saliva from a rabid animal gets into a fresh cut, wound or intact mucous membranes such as the eyes, nose and mouth. Person-to-person transmission is rare and occurs almost always as a result of organ or tissue transplant. While very rare, it's also possible that rabies can be spread in the air in caves infested with bats. Children are at greater risk because they are more likely to approach sick or dead animals out of curiosity and lack of knowledge.

Who can get infected?

People and all warm-blooded animals (mammals) can be infected with rabies. This includes pets such as cats, dogs and ferrets; farm animals such as cows and horses; and wild animals such as skunks, foxes, bats and raccoons.

What about pet exposure to rabies?

If you think your pet has recently been exposed to rabies from another animal, isolate your pet immediately and do not handle it any more than necessary. Call your veterinarian to find out what to do with your pet. You can also contact Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Development (MAFRD) and speak to a provincial veterinarian who can provide information and recommendations, or call Health Links – Info Santé for advice and a referral to the appropriate person or organization. If an animal suspected of carrying rabies requires euthanasia please refrain from shooting it in the head as the animal's brain is needed to test for the presence of rabies.

Note: The advice provided in this post is intended for informational purposes and does not constitute medical advice regarding pets. For an accurate diagnosis of your pet's condition, please make an appointment with your vet.

