

RABIES

WHAT IS IT?

Rabies is a virus that causes inflammation of the brain and spinal cord and ultimately death. Rabies is transmitted through the saliva of mammals.

Dog bites account for most exposures in international travelers. Non-bite exposures, such as a deep scratch or a lick of an open wound, may also transmit rabies.

Rabies is 100% fatal if not treated appropriately. Symptoms begin as mild viral illness and progress to paralysis, seizures, coma and death.

WHERE IS RABIES IN THE WORLD?

Rabies is present throughout the world, except Antarctica. Risk is low in Australia, New Zealand, parts of the South Pacific (Oceania), the Caribbean, North America and Western Europe.

High-risk areas include Africa, Asia, Central America and South America.

RISK FOR RABIES EXPOSURE?

Any traveler is at risk for rabies. Your risk for rabies exposure depends on travel itinerary, destination, length of trip and potential exposure to animals. We recommend no interaction with animals with fur during travel, particularly dogs.

Travelers at high risk for rabies transmission include veterinarians, wildlife biologists and long-term travelers.

RABIES PREVENTION?

Please consult a travel health specialist to determine your risk of rabies exposure.

Depending on your travel plans, consider getting the rabies vaccine before you depart.

There are two rabies vaccines that we consider safe and effective.

- > **HDCV (Imovax)** – Diploid cell rabies vaccine

> **PCEC (RabAvert)** – Purified chick embryo cell vaccine

RABIES TREATMENT

If exposed to rabies during travel via the bite or scratch of a mammal, seek medical care within **24 hours**.

If you did not get a rabies vaccine prior to travel, a combination of human rabies immune globulin and four rabies vaccinations will be needed.

For individuals that have received three shots of rabies vaccine prior to travel, you will need to get two additional shots of rabies vaccine within seven days of exposure.

Abbreviation	Name	Type of injection
HRIG	Human rabies immune globulin (antibodies)	Rabies antibodies given to people who are unvaccinated

FINDING AN APPROPRIATE MEDICAL FACILITY FOR RABIES TREATMENT

Consult with your local US consulate or embassy and/or use the [International Association for Medical Assistance to Travelers](#) (IAMAT). It is also vital to purchase medical evacuation coverage in the event of rabies exposure, especially if traveling to a remote location with limited access to rabies treatment.