



Sunrise Public Health
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INFORMATION ABOUT ANIMAL BITES

What should I do immediately after being bitten by an animal?



- For minor bites you can call Sunrise Public Health at 786-0600 for advice.
- If the bite occurs during an evening or weekend and you feel it is not serious enough to go to your doctor or the Emergency Department, you should discuss the incident by calling the Saskatchewan HealthLine at 1-877-800-0002.
- For all bites from stray or wild animals, bats, or for bites to the head and neck you should seek medical care immediately even if you think the bite is minor.

Call your doctor or go to the Emergency Department if:



- The person was bitten by an unknown or wild animal or bat
- The person has not had a tetanus shot in over five years
- There is swelling, redness, plus draining from the wound or pain
- If the bite is deep or large or you aren't sure if you need stitches

If you present to the Emergency Room with an animal bite, this incident must be reported to Public Health as per *The Public Health Act, 1994*.

What type of infection can I get from an animal bite?

- **Rabies** is a virus of the nervous system and the brain. It is most often contracted from being bitten by wild animals, such as skunks, bats, and foxes. However, domestic animals such as cattle, dogs, and cats may also carry the virus.
- **Tetanus** may develop from any bite. It is important for Public Health to know when your last Tetanus shot was.

What information does Public Health need?



- Gathering information on the circumstances of an animal bite is a crucial part of treatment.
- A *Report of Animal Bite Form* must be completed as soon as possible. This will be done while you are in the Emergency Department.
- It is important to document contact details, including accurate day and evening phone numbers. If known, please provide the name of the owner the pet.

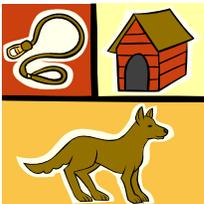


Is there a cost attached to receiving the rabies vaccine?

- There is no cost for vaccine if ordered by the Medical Health Officer.

If the bite is from a domestic animal, such as a pet dog or cat, what happens to the animal?

- If possible, the owner must confine the animal and place it under observation for 10 days. If the animal is alive and healthy after this time period, it is unlikely it has rabies.



- Public Health does not destroy or impound your animal, nor does it fine the owners.
- The animal **should not be** destroyed without contacting Public Health or the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (786-5300). After hours, call 782-2401 and ask for the Medical Health Officer on call.
- If you know the owner's name of the animal, you are required to provide that information.
- If the animal bite is high risk, the information you provide will be forwarded to the Medical Health Officer for instructions.

Things you can do to minimize your risk:

- ✓ Treat unknown or wild animals with caution
- ✓ Do not approach or touch a wild animal, especially if it appears to be sick
- ✓ Teach children not to touch or feed animals they do not know
- ✓ Have your pets vaccinated yearly for rabies.