

# Information for Veterinarians

## NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

This document serves as a ready reference for veterinarians practicing in NYC providing contact numbers and information pertaining to DOHMH disease protocols

### DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE (DOHMH)

#### Bureau of Communicable Disease (BCD); Zoonotic, Influenza and Vector-borne Disease Unit (ZIVDU) 212-788-9830

Offers consultation on the need for rabies postexposure and preexposure prophylaxis, titer testing and rabies epizootiology

#### Veterinary Public Health Services (VPHS) 212-676-2120; Animal Bite Unit (ABU) 212-676-2483\*

Makes arrangements for rabies testing, offers guidance on pets exposed to rabies, and investigates reports of animals biting humans

Within the DOHMH, there are two Bureaus that deal with veterinary related issues: the Bureau of Communicable Disease (BCD) houses the Zoonotic, Influenza and Vector-borne Disease Unit (ZIVDU), and the Bureau of Pest Control and Veterinary Affairs houses the Office of Veterinary Public Health Services (VPHS).

ZIVDU serves as a resource for animal and human health providers and is responsible for the surveillance and investigation of diseases that are transmissible between humans and animals (zoonoses) and arthropod transmitted diseases. ZIVDU also oversees animal disease reporting and maintains the link between animal and human health by communicating and conducting outreach to veterinarians and the animal health community.

Veterinary Alerts describing acute public health emergencies pertaining to the veterinary community are distributed via fax or email and a ZIVDU newsletter for veterinarians is mailed out two times a year. To view previous publications or to find out more about ZIVDU please visit our website at: <http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/zoo/zoo.shtml>. To join our fax, email or mailing list or to contact us, please call BCD.

Staff is available 24 hours a day for consultation on patients with a known or potential disease of public health concern, clinical questions on rabies, or information on rabies pre and postexposure prophylaxis. Contact BCD during regular business hours; after hours and weekends, callers will be directed to the on call emergency system.

VPHS has regulatory oversight and enforces laws pertaining to dog licensing, rabies vaccination, animal exhibition permits, animal handling establishment permits and rental horse licensing. It also monitors the contract for animal control services with Animal Care & Control (ACC). Within VPHS is the Animal Bite Unit (ABU) which receives and investigates reports of animal bites, dangerous dogs and coordinates rabies testing with the DOHMH rabies laboratory.

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

#### • It's the law

- **Dog licensing** – All dogs in NYC must be licensed. Applications are available through **311** or to license a dog online go to [www.nyc.gov/doglicense](http://www.nyc.gov/doglicense).
- **Rabies vaccination** – All dogs and cats, 4 months and older, must be actively vaccinated against rabies.

• **Illegal animals in NYC** – Several types of animal are illegal to own and may only be brought into NYC under certain circumstances and with prior approval. Non-permitted illegal animals may be reported by calling **311**. Animals brought into NYC for exhibit, motion pictures, TV, commercial and educational exhibitions must meet specific requirements and obtain a permit. For a list of illegal animals and information on permits visit [www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/permit/license\\_permit.shtml](http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/permit/license_permit.shtml).

• **Clusters of dead animals or birds** (10 birds of any type, 3 or more water birds, or individual mammals) may be reported by calling **311**.

• **Infectious disease consultations** are available regarding zoonotic or novel diseases or conditions with potential public health concern, as well as diagnostic assistance, by calling **BCD**.

• **Animals in disaster** – To order the Office of Emergency Management's "Ready New York for Pets" brochure call **311** or visit [www.nyc.gov/readyny](http://www.nyc.gov/readyny).

• **Radiographic equipment registration and inspection** – Registered equipment is inspected every 3 to 5 years. Facilities must provide the inspector with the following documents: registration certificate, notice to employees, radiation protection survey and Article 175 of the NYC Health Code pertaining to radiation. For more information call **311**.

• **Animal bites** – Report animal bites to humans by calling **311**, **ABU** or online at [www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/vet/vetegp.shtml](http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/vet/vetegp.shtml).

• **License requirements** and applications for animal boarding, training, grooming, pet shops or shelters can be obtained by calling **VPHS** or online at: [www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/permit/license\\_permit2.shtml#animals](http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/permit/license_permit2.shtml#animals).

• **Animal related complaints** – To file a complaint about an animal handling establishment or other animal issue call **311**.

### ANIMAL DISEASE REPORTING

Several animal diseases are reportable to the DOHMH. A universal report form is available online at: [www.nyc.gov/html/doh/downloads/pdf/zoo/zoo-disease-report-form.pdf](http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/downloads/pdf/zoo/zoo-disease-report-form.pdf)

#### Upon suspicion, call **BCD** immediately to report any of the following:

- Anthrax
- Monkeypox
- Rabies
- Brucellosis
- Plague
- SARS
- Glanders
- Q fever
- Tularemia
- Influenza caused by a novel influenza viral strain with pandemic potential, or
- An outbreak of any disease or condition in animals, of known or unknown etiology, which may pose a danger to public health.

#### Upon diagnosis call or fax **BCD** within 24 hours to report any of the following:

- Arboviral encephalitides
- Salmonellosis
- Leptospirosis
- Tuberculosis
- Psittacosis
- Rocky Mountain spotted fever

**Phone:** call **BCD** at 212-788-9830

**Fax:** complete an Animal Disease Report Form and fax to 212-788-4268

For more information on reportable diseases, diagnostic assistance or infection control guidance, call **BCD** or visit the **ZIVDU** website.

### RABIES

#### Rabies Information

**Background** – The primary rabies vector species in NYC include raccoons and bats. Raccoon and bat rabies have been reported from all five boroughs, although the epizootiology varies each year. Other animals testing positive for rabies in NYC are typically infected after a bite from a rabid raccoon and have included skunks and cats. To get the most updated surveillance data regarding rabies in NYC please visit our website at [www.nyc.gov/health/rabies](http://www.nyc.gov/health/rabies).

**Transmission** – Rabies can be transmitted from an infected animal through a bite or contamination of a fresh open wound with saliva or neural tissue. Bites or other exposures to humans from rabies vector species or any animal known or suspected of being rabid should immediately be reported to the **ABU** and evaluated by **BCD** or a health care provider to assess the need for rabies postexposure prophylaxis.

#### Rabies Laws in NYC

**Rabies vaccination** – Any person who owns or harbors in New York City, a dog or cat four months of age or older, shall have such animal actively immunized against rabies. Actively immunized shall mean injection of a rabies vaccine which meets the standards prescribed by the United States Department of Agriculture for interstate sale and administered according to the manufacturer's instructions under the direction of a duly licensed veterinarian.

**Reporting rabid animals** – Any veterinarian, staff member, or animal owner who is aware of an animal affected with or suspected of having rabies shall immediately report it to **VPHS**. The animal should be confined in a manner that does not pose a threat to the persons handling it, and surrendered to the DOHMH for rabies testing.

**Management of animals exposed to rabies** – Any dog, cat or domestic ferret or livestock which has been bitten by, come in contact with, or kept together with a rabid animal must be reported to the DOHMH. Please refer to the algorithm for additional guidance.

**Management of biting animals** – Reports of humans bitten by animals should be made to the **ABU** or **311**, or filed online at <http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/vet/vetegp.shtml>.

**ABU** coordinates follow-up with the animal, its owner, and the person bitten to ensure that the animal is managed appropriately. Healthy dogs, cats, ferrets and livestock that have bitten someone can be watched for a 10 day observation period at the owner's home. Unvaccinated animals should not be given rabies vaccine until the conclusion of the 10 day observation period. If the animal remains healthy, the bite victim does not need rabies postexposure prophylaxis (PEP).

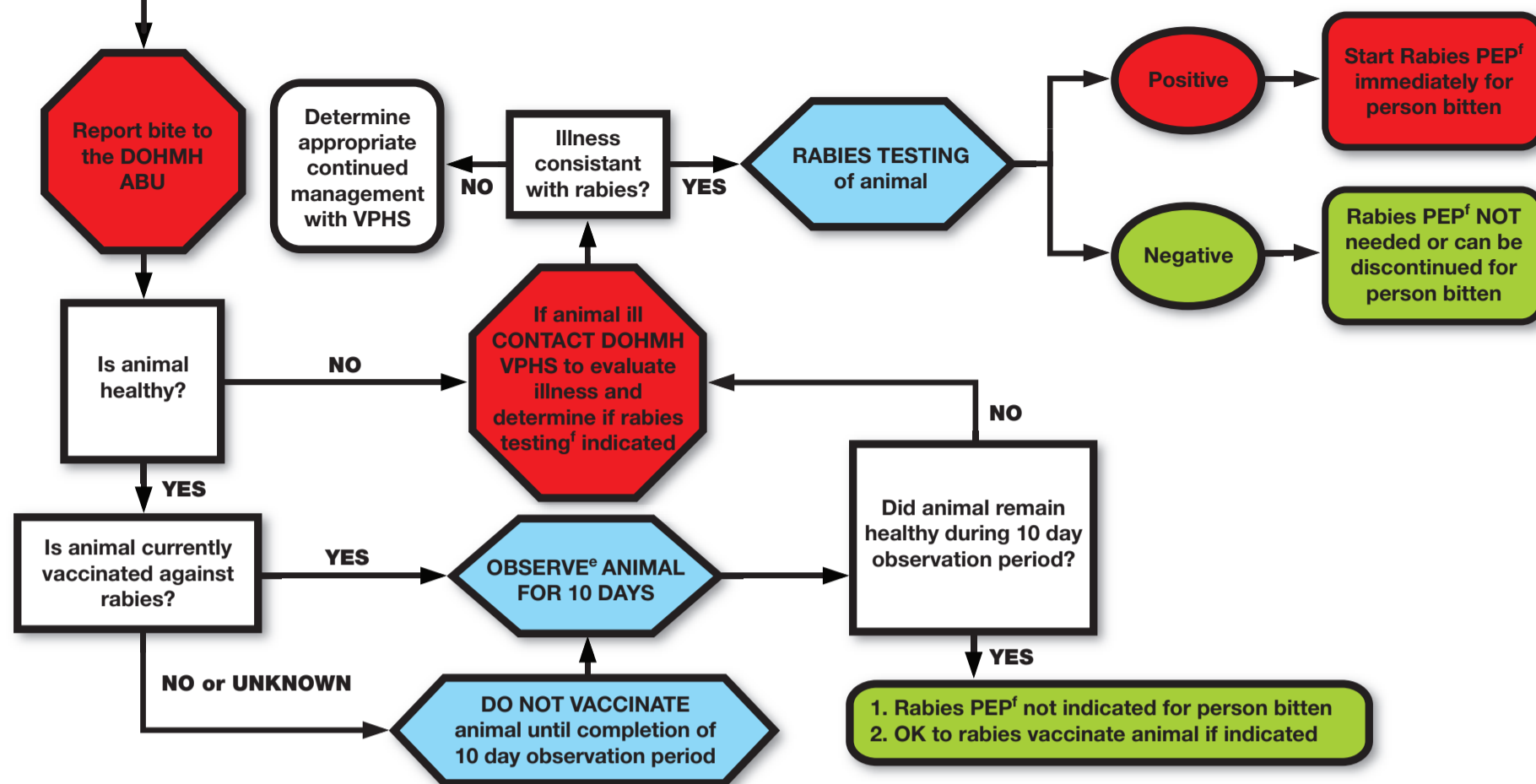
Animals that are ill at the time of the bite or that go on to develop illness during the 10 day observation period must immediately be reported to the **ABU** and evaluated by a veterinarian to determine whether rabies testing is indicated. Please refer to the algorithm for additional guidance.

## Dog/cat/ferret<sup>c</sup>/livestock<sup>d</sup> bites a person

(management of other biting animals is less straightforward and requires consultation with ABU)

## Management of Dogs/Cats/Ferrets<sup>c</sup>/Livestock<sup>d</sup> that Bite Humans

All animal bites are reportable to the DOHMH and are usually made by a physician or the person bitten. The ABU within the Office of VPHS coordinates follow-up with the animal, its owner, and the person bitten to ensure that the animal is managed appropriately. Healthy dogs, cats, ferrets and livestock that have bitten someone can be watched for a 10 day observation period at the owner's home. Questions regarding human rabies postexposure prophylaxis should be directed to BCD.

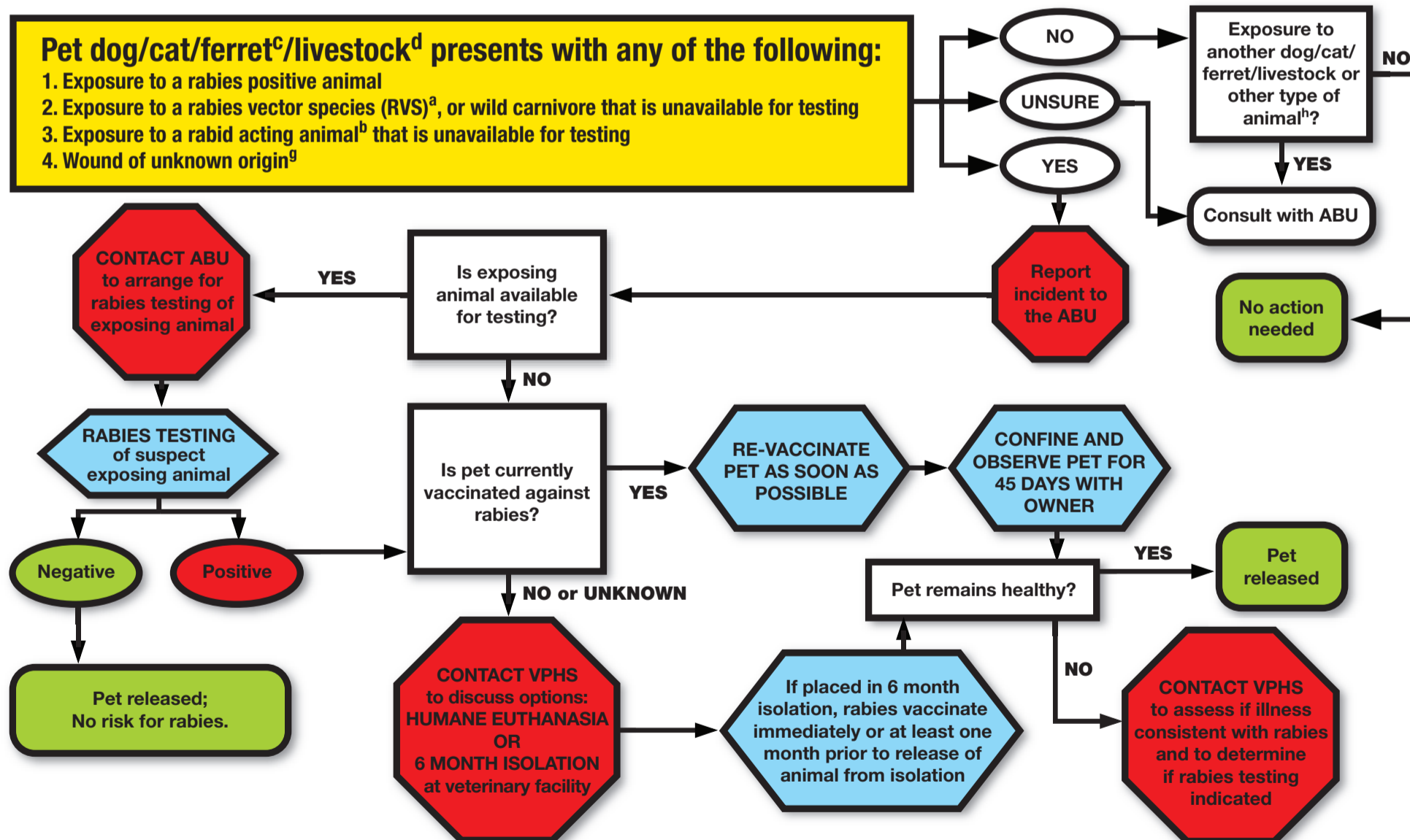


## Management of Pets with a Rabies Exposure

A rabies exposure is defined as any bite or incident in which saliva or central nervous system (CNS) tissue from a rabid or potentially rabid animal did or could have had direct contact with mucous membrane or a break in the skin of a domestic animal.

### Pet dog/cat/ferret<sup>c</sup>/livestock<sup>d</sup> presents with any of the following:

1. Exposure to a rabies positive animal
2. Exposure to a rabies vector species (RVS)<sup>a</sup>, or wild carnivore that is unavailable for testing
3. Exposure to a rabid acting animal<sup>b</sup> that is unavailable for testing
4. Wound of unknown origin<sup>g</sup>



**a Rabies Vector Species (RVS):** Raccoon, bat, skunk, fox, coyote, mongoose.

**b Suspect rabid animal:** Any carnivore that is unavailable for testing or any mammal with illness or behavior consistent with rabies that is unavailable for testing. Exposure to other domestic animals may warrant further investigation if the animal exposed is not currently vaccinated against rabies.

**c Ferrets are illegal in NYC.**

**d Livestock:** Horse, mule, donkey, sheep, goat, and swine (pig).

**e 10 DAY OBSERVATION:** Done at the owner's home unless otherwise indicated.

**f Contact BCD for guidance on rabies PEP in humans.**

**g Wounds of unknown origin must be considered a potential rabies exposure**

**h Small rodents and lagomorphs** are deemed low risk for rabies and as such, encounters with these animals are not considered an exposure to rabies unless there is reason to suspect the animal is rabid. Large rodents such as **groundhogs and beavers as well as opossums (marsupials)** have tested positive for rabies in areas where raccoon rabies is established. Consult with the ABU for encounters with such animals to determine the appropriate course of action.

When handling an animal with a potential rabies exposure, ALWAYS:

1. Wear gloves when handling saliva-contaminated wounds or hair.
2. Irrigate fresh wounds for 10-15 minutes and disinfect.
3. Refer persons with potential rabies exposures to BCD for consultation.

### DOHMH CONTACT INFORMATION

BCD = Bureau of Communicable Disease

212-788-9830

ZIVDU = Zoonotic, Influenza and Vector-borne Disease Unit

212-788-9830

VPHS = Veterinary Public Health Service

ask for ZIVDU

ABU = Animal Bite Unit

212-646-2120

212-646-2483