

Kenneth W. Jenkins
County Executive

Sherlita Amler, M.D.
Commissioner of Health

ATTENTION

Public Health Alert

DATE: 18 July 2025

SUBJECT: Rabies Post Exposure Prophylaxis (RPEP) Guidance

TO: Hospital Emergency Medicine, Pharmacy Directors, Chief Medical Officers, Infection Control Practitioners, Infectious Disease physicians, Director of Nursing, Financial Services, and relevant staff

Urgent Care Directors, Providers, and relevant staff

All Treating Providers

Rabies exposures are seasonal; the vast majority of potential rabies exposures occur during the summer months.

Please review and ensure that relevant staff review the attached algorithm (also posted to the WCDH website at <https://health.westchestergov.com/images/stories/PDF/Rabies%20PEP%20Algorithm%20Public-Website%20Jul%202025.docx.pdf> and the below information which are a reminder of CDC and NYSDOH RPEP guidance and mandated reporting under NYS Public Health Law.

All clinicians who may see patients with potential rabies exposures are strongly encouraged to familiarize themselves with the attached algorithm and make referrals to hospital EDs for RPEP. Hospital EDs are the only healthcare facilities in Westchester County that reliably have both Human Rabies Immunoglobulin (HRIG) and Rabies vaccine required to initiate RPEP.

- Individuals with an actual physical wound should seek immediate medical attention.
- Individuals with no physical wound (the vast majority of bat exposures) should contact WCDH at 914-813-5000 for guidance (available 24/7).

All ED clinicians should be thoroughly familiar with RPEP indications and reporting requirements and **MUST fax** reports of all animal bites and RPEP initiated at the time of the encounter as detailed below. WCDH can be called if questions remain following review of the attached algorithm and consultation with a treating physician at the respective healthcare facility.

WCDH's role is limited to determining whether a scenario meets CDC and NYSDOH criteria for RPEP. The decision to initiate RPEP is that of the treating provider.

RPEP costs for exposures that do not meet CDC and NYSDOH RPEP criteria are the responsibility of the health care provider/facility and the respective patient(s).

Please see https://health.westchestergov.com/images/stories/PDF/nys_rabies_treatment_guidelines2024.pdf for additional Rabies exposures and RPEP guidance and

<https://health.westchestergov.com/rabies> for all reporting forms and additional rabies information.

Other Key Points:

Some of the most important measures to prevent the need for RPEP (which requires a series of multiple injections over many days) are below:

- Bat in home exposure – **Capture the bat for rabies testing** and call 914-813-5000 to arrange the testing – see video at <https://health.westchestergov.com/rabies/rabies-in-bats>. The overwhelming majority of bats are not rabid and do not require RPEP for exposure.
- Dog, cat or other domestic animal bite - **Obtain the name and contact information of the biting animal's owner**. If the animal can be observed and determined to be healthy for 10 days, regardless of rabies vaccination status, there is no need for RPEP.

Reporting requirements:

NYS Public Health Laws and Regulations (10 NYCRR 2.10,2,14 and 2.24) require the reporting of animal bites or exposures and the initiation of RPEP. The below fillable forms must be completed and **faxed to WCDH at the time of the encounter**:

All animal bites must be reported to WCDH by completing and **faxing the below forms** to **914-813-5160**:

1) **Animal Bite Report Form**

<https://health.westchestergov.com/images/stories/PDF/reportanimalbiteform22.pdf>

and

2) **Health Care Provider Human Rabies Exposure and RPEP Decision Form**

https://health.westchestergov.com/images/stories/PDF/FILLABLE%20Rabies%20Hospital-Healthcare%20Provider%20RPEP%20Report%20Form_7-14-2025.pdf

If RPEP is initiated, the below form with the initial HRIG and vaccine information must be faxed to WCDH at **914-813-5182**. A **follow up form** at the time of RPEP completion must be submitted.

3) **Human Rabies Biological Administration Form**

https://health.westchestergov.com/images/stories/PDF/FILLABLE%20Rabies%20Biological%20Administration%20Record_7-14-25.pdf

As always, thank you for your continued support and commitment to protecting the health of Westchester's residents.