

IMOVAX® Rabies – Rabies Vaccine Inactivated (DCO) [For pre-exposure immunization]



Discuss with your healthcare provider whether this vaccine is appropriate for you.

What is rabies?

Rabies is a viral infection that affects the brain and is spread by direct contact with an infected animal. It is a fatal disease found on all continents, except Antarctica.

How is rabies spread?

The rabies virus is spread by infected animals when their saliva comes in contact with you through biting or scratching, or licking a scratch or wound.

What animals are most often infected with rabies?

The types of animals that most often can be infected may vary from country to country. In Canada, skunks, bats, raccoons, foxes, cattle, stray dogs and cats are the most common wildlife carriers of rabies. Rabies is more common in parts of the developing world where stray animals live close to humans. The WHO estimates approximately 59,000 people die of rabies each year, largely in Asia and Africa. The main route of exposure is through bites from an infected animal. To note that in recent years, bats-related rabies has become the most important public health concerns for rabies in the Americas and the Caribbean. Rabies may be a bigger risk for children who are more likely to touch stray animals and less likely to report it. Remember that not all animals that have rabies are mean or vicious; some are quiet and docile.

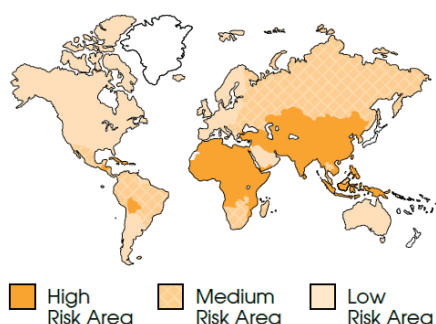
How can I protect myself?

Vaccination with IMOVAX® Rabies before any potential contact with an infected animal reduces the number of injections you will require if you are exposed to rabies. This is particularly important for travellers to high-risk areas where there is limited access to post-exposure rabies treatment. You will receive 3 injections for pre-exposure immunization:

- 2 injections, 1 week apart;
- a third injection, 2 weeks after the second injection.

Persons with a weakened immune system, whether from disease or treatment, may not obtain the expected protection from the vaccine. Your healthcare provider may do a blood test to confirm your level of protection. Immunization is an important measure in preventing rabies, but it is not 100% protective.

Travellers are advised to practice caution around strange animals and to be aware of their surroundings at all times. Ask your healthcare provider about ways to protect yourself from exposure to diseases transmitted by animals. Have a bleeding disorder or are taking blood thinning medications? Tell the person giving you the injection about your condition. The injection must be done carefully to prevent excessive bleeding.



Who should get vaccinated?

Individuals travelling to a rabies risk area should consider receiving IMOVAX® Rabies pre-exposure. Others include people at potentially high risk of contact with rabid animals, such as certain laboratory workers, veterinarians, animal control and wildlife workers, spelunkers, and persons hunting and trapping in high-risk areas.

Who should not be vaccinated with IMOVAX® Rabies pre-exposure?

- anyone with a known severe allergy to the vaccine or any of its components. To help avoid side effects and ensure proper use, talk to your healthcare provider before you or your child take IMOVAX® Rabies. Talk about any health conditions or problems you may have, including if you have any allergies to this vaccine or its ingredients or components of the container
- anyone acutely ill with an infection or fever. Wait until you are well before receiving the vaccine;
- pregnant women should discuss the risks and benefits of IMOVAX® Rabies vaccination with their healthcare provider.

If you have been exposed to rabies virus, you should get the vaccine regardless of any other illnesses you may have.

Are there any side effects?

Some people who receive IMOVAX® Rabies may have side effects such as swollen lymph nodes, hives, rash, shortness of breath, wheezing, headache, dizziness, nausea, abdominal pain, vomiting, diarrhea, muscle aches, pain in joints, bodily discomfort, fever or chills. Some people who receive IMOVAX® Rabies may have pain, redness, swelling, bruising or itching at the site where the needle was given. Nervous system disorders have been reported after rabies vaccine, but this happens so rarely that it is not known if they are related to the vaccine. A vaccine, like any medicine, may cause serious problems, such as severe allergic reactions. The risk of IMOVAX® Rabies causing serious harm is extremely small. The small risks associated with IMOVAX® Rabies are much less than the risks associated with getting rabies. Tell your doctor, nurse or pharmacist as soon as possible if you do not feel well after receiving IMOVAX® Rabies. This is not a complete list of side effects. If you have a troublesome symptom or side effect that is not listed here or becomes bad enough to interfere with your daily activities, talk to your healthcare provider.

Will I ever need another IMOVAX® Rabies vaccination?

Anyone who comes into contact with a suspected rabies-infected animal must consider post-exposure immunization with IMOVAX® Rabies. A decision on the management of the person with suspected infection must be made rapidly and judiciously since delay in starting a course of vaccine reduces its effectiveness, and the disease, once symptoms appear, is almost always fatal.

If you are exposed and have received a complete course of pre-exposure immunization, you will require 2 post-exposure injections. If you have not received a complete course of pre-exposure immunization, you will require 5 post-exposure injections of vaccine as well as rabies immune globulin. Your healthcare provider can discuss complete dosing information with you.

A booster dose of the vaccine may be recommended after 2 years if you travel to an area where the risk of disease exists, or you are at continued risk of being exposed to rabies.

Important Health Tip

If you are bitten or scratched by any animal that might have rabies, wash the wound immediately for several minutes with lots of soap and clean water. You must see a doctor immediately for treatment, even if you have been vaccinated.

NOTE: Disease risk areas change over time. Ask your healthcare provider for the most current disease information for your destination.

CLINIC INFORMATION:

DISCLAIMER: The information contained in this document is being provided for general information purposes only and is not meant to substitute in any way whatsoever for advice, medical care or treatment from a healthcare provider. Please consult your healthcare provider with any questions or inquiries. This information and your receipt thereof is not intended to be, nor shall be deemed to be, informed consent by you to any medical care or treatment whatsoever.

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Consult with your private insurance plan for IMOVAX® Rabies coverage information. Drug Identification Number (DIN): 01908286
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