

Guidance on Animal Rabies Quarantines and Booster Vaccination Timing in Los Angeles County

VETERINARY PUBLIC HEALTH PROGRAM



In California, anyone with knowledge of an animal bite to a human must report the incident to their local rabies control agency (e.g. animal control, local public health agency), including veterinarians and their staff. Every effort should be made to locate and test wild mammals for rabies who bite humans or animals.

INCIDENT <i>Bite includes skin scratched by a tooth</i>	MINIMUM QUARANTINE LENGTH AND RABIES VACCINATION TIMING IN ANIMALS FOLLOWING A BITE OR EXPOSURE
Dog, Cat, or Ferret* Bite to a Human	- 10-day quarantine of biting animal to observe for signs of rabies <u>REGARDLESS</u> of the rabies vaccination status of the biting animal. - If the rabies vaccine status is overdue/unknown, do NOT give a rabies vaccine to the biting animal during the quarantine period. Administer the rabies vaccine after the animal is released from quarantine. This ensures possible vaccine reactions are not confused with signs of rabies and reduces the number of people handling the animal during the quarantine period.
Dog, Cat, Ferret* Bitten by or Exposed to a Wild Mammal Where the wild mammal tests positive for rabies OR is unavailable to be tested for rabies. Common wild mammals that are considered rabies vectors in LA County include: bats, raccoons, skunks, opossums, coyotes, foxes Rodent Guidance In LA County, bites from <u>rabbits, squirrels, rats, mice, and other small rodents</u> (gophers, chinchillas, hamsters etc.) are not reportable to public health. Although they are mammals, they are not considered rabies vectors. However, veterinarians are encouraged to consult with public health if there is an unusual situation involving a small rodent. <u>Large rodents</u> (e.g. beaver, groundhogs/woodchucks, porcupine) are rabies vectors and bites from large rodents are reportable to public health.	If pet is CURRENT on rabies vaccination at the time of incident (Proof of rabies certificate issued prior to the bite incident is required): - 30-day quarantine of the animal bitten - Administer a rabies booster vaccine immediately, even if rabies vaccine is not yet due. This is to prevent the animal from developing rabies after exposure to a potentially rabid wild mammal. If rabies vaccination is NOT up to date at the time of incident, but there is proof of prior rabies vaccination: - 180-day quarantine of the animal bitten - Administer rabies booster vaccine immediately. This is to prevent the animal from developing rabies after exposure to a potentially rabid wild mammal. If pet has NEVER been vaccinated for rabies or is still within 30 days of its first ever dose of rabies vaccine: - 180-day quarantine of the animal bitten - Administer rabies booster vaccine immediately. It is strongly recommended to provide additional rabies booster vaccinations at: - o 3 weeks - o 8 weeks This protocol has been shown to prevent rabies in previously unvaccinated animals.[†]
Livestock Species Bite to a Human	30-day quarantine <u>REGARDLESS</u> of rabies vaccination status of biting animal.
Livestock Species Bitten by or Exposed to a Wild Mammal	If currently up to date on rabies vaccination - 30-day quarantine of the animal bitten - Administer rabies booster vaccination immediately If NOT current on rabies vaccination or unvaccinated - 180-day quarantine of the animal bitten - Administer rabies booster vaccination immediately.[‡]

*Because pet ferrets are illegal in California, any ferret isolated for a human bite should be reported to the California Department of Fish and Game for disposition following the isolation ([CDPH Rabies Compendium](#)).

[†]Wilson, P. J., Hunt, P. R., and E. P. Fonken. "Rabies Postexposure Prophylaxis Protocol Option for Unvaccinated Domestic Animals, Texas: 2010–2019." *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association*, vol. 262, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.2460/javma.23.11.0625>

[‡]No rabies vaccine is licensed for use in goats in the U.S. However, rabies vaccines licensed for use in sheep are often used off label in goats.

<https://cals.cornell.edu/nys-4-h-animal-science-programs/livestock/goats/goat-educational-resources/vaccinating-goats>