

Evaluating Human Rabies Risk from Animal Bites: Bats & Wild Animals

North Carolina Communicable Disease Branch – Veterinary Public Health Program



For additional information, contact your local health department, or:

N.C. Communicable Disease Branch, 919-733-3419 (24/7)

<http://epi.publichealth.nc.gov/cd/diseases/rabies.html>

What constitutes a rabies exposure?

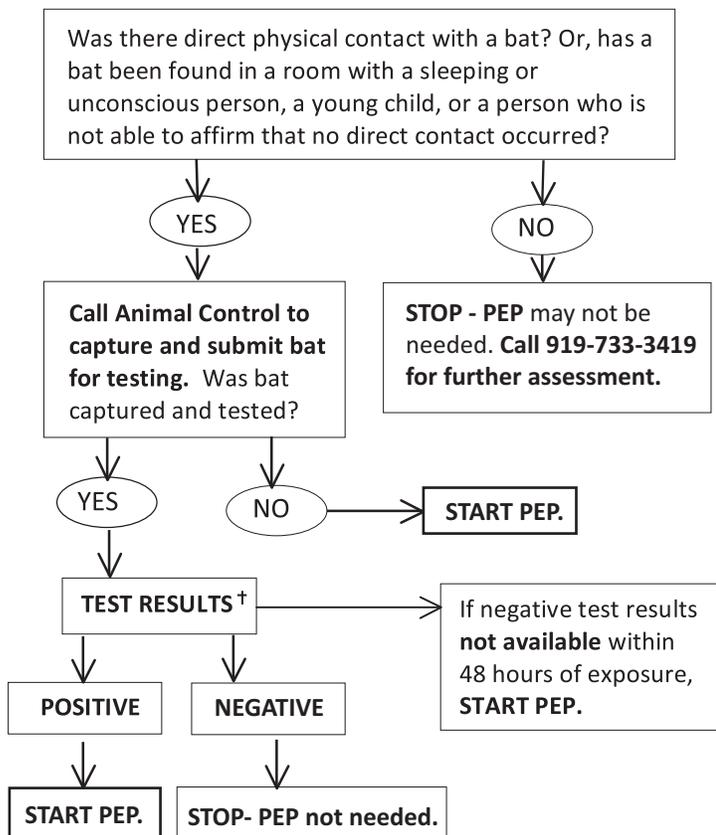
An exposure is any penetration of skin by the teeth of a potentially rabid animal or contamination of scratches, abrasions, open wounds or mucous membranes with saliva or other potentially infectious material (such as brain or nervous tissue) from a potentially rabid animal.

Questions to ask:

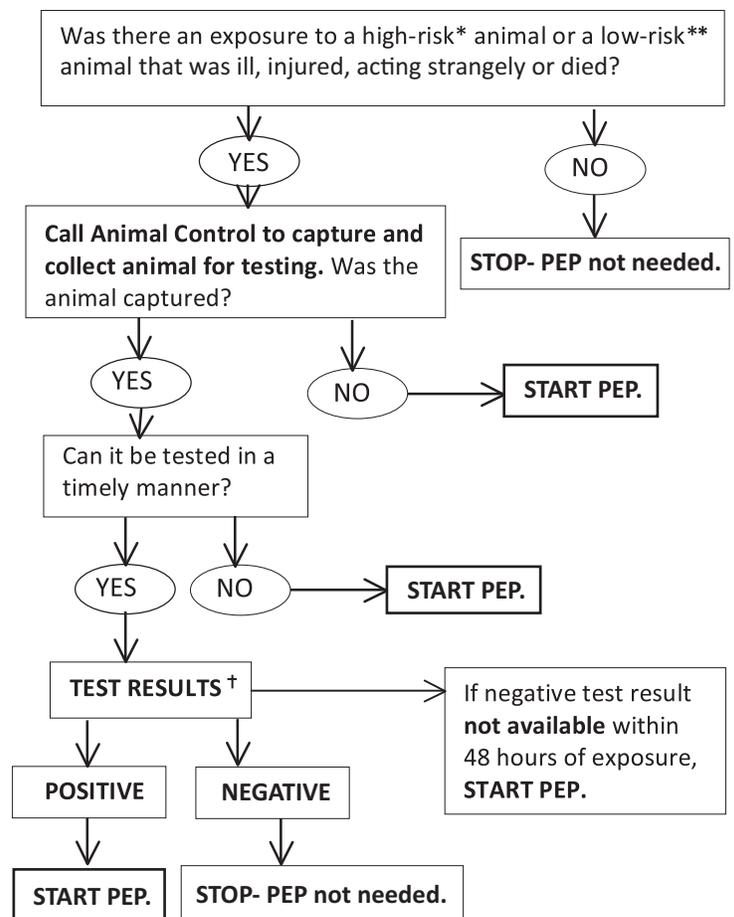
- When and where (location) did the exposure occur?
- What was the source animal species? Was it a high-risk or low-risk species*? Low-risk*but acting unusual?
- Can the exposed person positively identify the source animal?
- Is the source animal available? If so, has Animal Control been contacted for capture and testing?
- What were the circumstances of the exposure: Provoked or unprovoked?
- Was there exposure to rabies virus as defined above? **If so, exposed person should contact a healthcare provider.**

Is post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) needed?

Bats



Other Wild Animals



*High-risk: Raccoon, skunk, fox, bat, large carnivore (e.g., bobcat), large rodent (e.g., groundhog, beaver).
 **Low-risk: Small rodent (e.g., squirrel, mouse, rat, mole, hamster, guinea pig), lagomorph (rabbit).
 † If the test results are Unsatisfactory or Test Not Performed call 919-733-3419 for assessment.