

**Mission:**

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.

**Ron DeSantis**

Governor

**Dr. Joseph A. Ladapo, MD, PhD**

State Surgeon General

**Vision:** To be the Healthiest State in the Nation

June 15, 2023

Re: Rabies Humane Immunoglobulin Administration (HRIG)

DEAR HEALTHCARE PROVIDER:

This letter is to notify healthcare providers that as of July 1, 2023, the Florida Department of Health in Hillsborough County (FDOH-Hillsborough) **will no longer administer Human Rabies Immunoglobulin (HRIG)** for patients bitten by animals where rabies postexposure was probable. FDOH-Hillsborough **will continue to administer rabies postexposure (PEP) vaccines**. Patients referred to FDOH-Hillsborough for HRIG will be assessed, if it is determined that HRIG treatment is necessary, a referral form will be given to the patient to present to the local emergency department for rabies postexposure treatment initiation.

After an animal bite, patients presenting to the emergency department should be evaluated using recommendations provided by FDOH-Hillsborough.

These recommendations remain the same: initiate Rabies Post Exposure (PEP) and HRIG treatment when a victim was exposed to rabies from a raccoon, bat, fox, otter, stray cat or stray dog's bite and the bite was on the face or neck of the victim or if the animal was not identifiable, not at a known location or if the animals' carcass is not available for testing. FDOH-Hillsborough will continue to schedule follow-up rabies vaccine appointments to complete rabies postexposure vaccine regimen.

If during the investigation process FDOH-Hillsborough determines HRIG treatment is necessary and has not been initiated for the patient, a referral form will be given to the patient to present to the local emergency department for rabies postexposure treatment initiation.

As a reminder per Chapter 64D-3.029, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.) "Procedure for Control of Specific Communicable Diseases", diseases or conditions must be reported to the Florida Department of Health by practitioner, hospital, laboratory or other individual, this includes animal bites to humans by a potentially rabid animal.

Should you have any questions related to this change or need additional technical assistance on this matter, please contact Mr. Douglas King, Environmental Supervisor, at (813) 559-4331.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Douglas A. Holt", is written over a blue horizontal line.

Douglas A. Holt, MD, FACP  
Director

Florida Department of Health - Hillsborough

**Florida Department of Health – Hillsborough County**

Division of Environmental Health

P.O. Box 5135

Tampa, FL 33675-5135

PHONE: (813) 307-8059 • FAX: (813) 272-7242

**Accredited Health Department**  
Public Health Accreditation Board

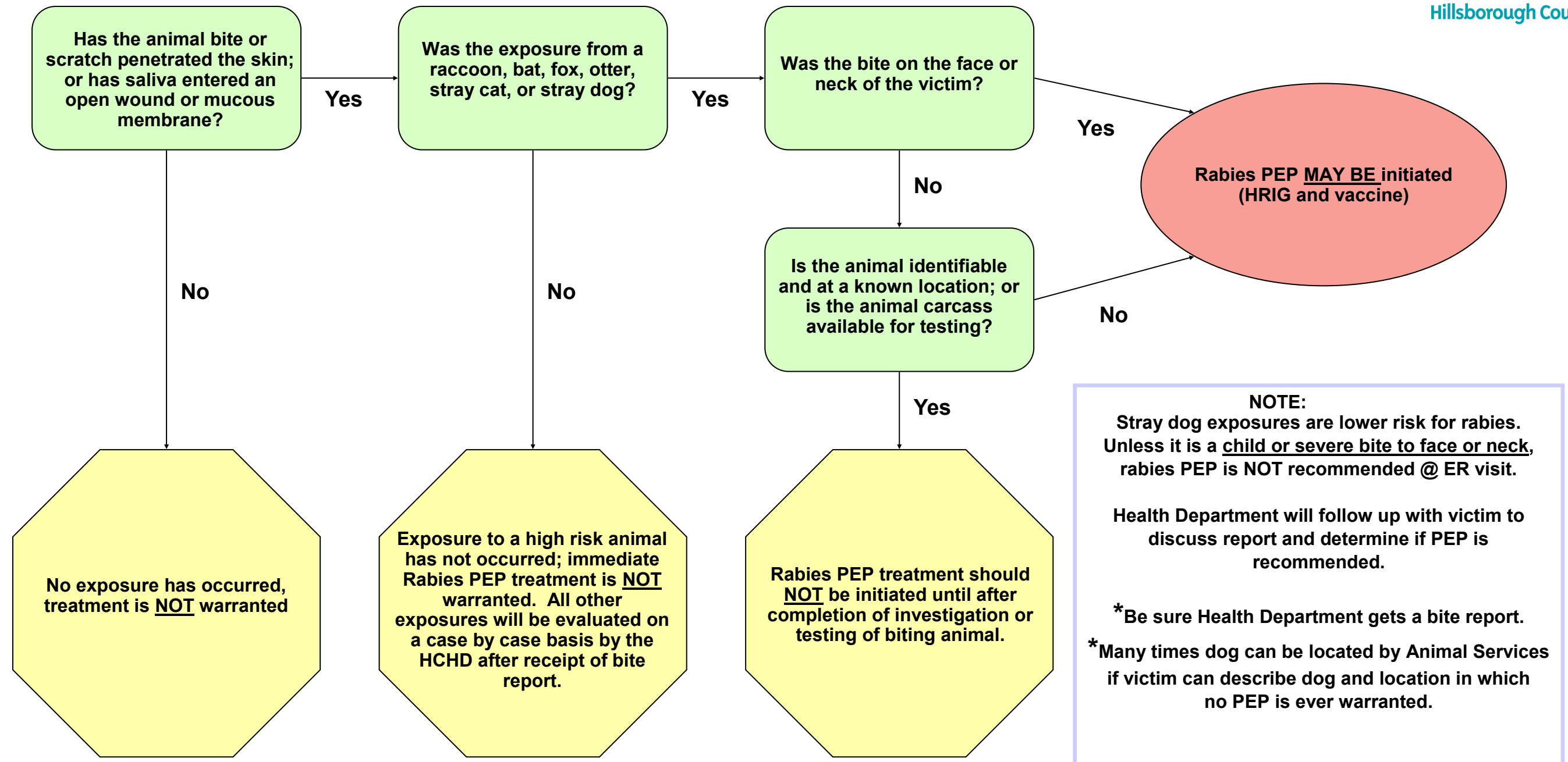
cc:

Brian Miller, Environmental Administrator, Hillsborough County Health Department

Gisela Hernandez, RN, BSN, Director of Nursing, Hillsborough County Health Department

Ryan Terry, Public Information Officer, Hillsborough County Health Department

# Rabies Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) Guidance



All animal bites must be reported by fax to (813) 272-7242 (HCHD Environmental Health) regardless of treatment provided as per Florida Administrative Code Chapter 64D-3. Wound care should be given according to standard practices whether or not PEP is recommended.  
If consultation is needed during business hours please call (813) 307-8059; after hours please call (813) 307-8000.  
Hillsborough County Animal Services may be contacted at (813) 744-5660 by victim to begin animal observation period or arrange for testing of dead animal.

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From:	Date:
Client's Name:	Parent/Guardian Name:
Telephone Number:	Mailing Address:

Hillsborough County Health Department recommends you receive Rabies Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) to include Humane Rabies Immunoglobulin (HIRIG) and Rabies vaccines immediately.

Recommendation is based on our investigation that you were:

☐ Exposed to a \_\_\_\_\_, which tested positive for the rabies virus

☐ Exposed to a high-risk wild animal e.g., Raccoon, Fox, Bat, Skunk, Otter, or unknown wild animal which could not be located.

☐ Exposed to a domestic animal that we are unable to determine health status of at this time.

Please seek medical attention and Rabies PEP treatment at the nearest emergency department. Subsequent Rabies vaccines may be scheduled at Florida Department of Health-Hillsborough Immunizations Clinic.

You must obtain paperwork indicating the type of rabies treatment/vaccines received from the emergency department before continuing treatment at the Department of Health immunization clinic.

Rabies Program Contacts between the hours of 8:00am- 5:00pm:  
Doug King (813) 559-4331  
Lindsay Albright (813) 559-4339  
For afterhours call (813) 307-8000

**Note:** Florida Department of Health -Hillsborough is not responsible for any cost incurred from your physician or emergency department visit.