



SEPT. 2, 2008

HEALTH UPDATE

Rabies Vaccine Supply Continues To Be Very Limited

Rabies vaccine supply from Novartis and Sanofi-Pasteur continue to be very limited. At this time, Sanofi is now the main supplier of rabies vaccine in the United States. This situation has been fluid, with both vaccine manufacturers making frequent changes regarding ordering protocol and vaccine availability. It is expected that the current supply situation will last into October. *It is prudent that health-care providers ascertain accurate histories when evaluating possible exposures and animals that are the source of exposure are secured for testing or observation.*

Pharmacists and providers are encouraged to work together to develop protocols in order to coordinate the ordering of vaccine after providers have consulted with public health on possible exposures. This way, when pharmacists call for the password to place the order, the consultation will have been already completed.

The North Dakota Department of Health will continue to use the health alert network (HAN) to provide updates on this situation.

Guidance for Ordering Vaccine

Novartis Vaccine (RabAvert)

Effective August 28, Novartis will fill orders only for the following situations:

- Bite exposures only from known rabid animals
- Limited supplies may be available for situations in which patients have severe reactions to Sanofi's rabies vaccine (IMOVAX).

*Public health consultation and password will still be required to order the vaccine.

Sanofi-Pasteur vaccine (IMOVAX)

- Effective August 29, Sanofi will have vaccine available under the following guidelines:
 - Consultation with public health officials and a password will be required to order the vaccine.
 - The password will need to be entered on the order form.

For more information:

Novartis' letter can be found at <https://www.novartisvaccinesdirect.com/RabAvert.aspx> .

Further information can be found at CDC's website at <http://www.cdc.gov/rabies>

Guidance for health-care providers who have patients with possible rabies exposures can be found at www.ndhealth.gov/disease under "current issues."

Both the Novartis and Sanofi passwords and 24/7 consultation are available from the North Dakota Department of Health, Division of Disease Control by calling 800.472.2180 or 701.328.2378.

Categories of Health Alert messages:

- *Health Alert conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.*
- *Health Advisory provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.*
- *Health Update provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; no immediate action necessary.*
- *Health Information provides general information that is not necessarily considered to be of an emergent nature.*

This message is being sent to local public health units, clinics, hospitals, physicians, tribal health, North Dakota Nurses Association, North Dakota Long Term Care Association, North Dakota Healthcare Association, North Dakota Medical Association, North Dakota EMS Association and hospital public information officers.