

SEPTEMBER 29, 2004

HEALTH ADVISORY

Puppy in Reynolds, ND from Rabies Infected Litter

There has been considerable concern regarding possible exposure to a black Labrador puppy from the Reynolds/Buxton area in North Dakota that originated from a litter in Minnesota where rabies was confirmed.

The exposure of the litter to the rabid skunk occurred on August 28, 2004. The puppy in question was purchased on September 4, 2004. The puppy subsequently was involved in an accident and was euthanized by the owner on September 6, 2004. The puppy was not able to be tested for rabies, although the owner indicated that the puppy was in good health at the time of its death.

The North Dakota Department of Health has consulted with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) regarding this situation. Although it is unlikely that the puppy would have been infectious at this time even if had been exposed to rabies, it is not possible to definitely rule out rabies without laboratory testing. Therefore, an evaluation regarding the exposure to the puppy to determine the need for rabies postexposure is necessary.

The Division of Disease Control is obtaining a list of people from the owner who may have been in contact with the puppy. These people will be contacted and provided information regarding their potential exposure to the puppy. If they have experienced a significant exposure to the puppy or if there is insufficient information to determine an exposure, they will be recommended to contact their health care provider. It is also possible that providers may be contacted by people who may not be on the list provided. If this occurs please have them contact the Division of Disease Control at the numbers provided below. The following information should assist you in determining the need for postexposure rabies prophylaxis.

Rabies is usually transmitted to humans by a bite of a rabid animal. It is also possible, but quite rare, that people may get rabies if infectious material from a rabid animal, such as saliva, gets directly into their eyes, nose, mouth or an open wound. **Other contact, such as petting a rabid animal or contact with the blood, urine or feces (e.g., guano) of a rabid animal, does not constitute an exposure and is not an indication for prophylaxis.**

Rabies postexposure prophylaxis in the United States consists of a regimen of one dose of rabies immune globulin (RIG) and five doses of rabies vaccine at days 0, 3, 7, 14, and 28. If RIG was not administered when vaccination was begun, it can be administered through the seventh day after the administration of the first dose of vaccine. Beyond the seventh day, RIG is not indicated since an antibody response to cell culture vaccine is presumed to have occurred.

Previously vaccinated persons exposed to rabies should receive two IM doses (1.0 mL each) of vaccine, one immediately and one 3 days later. Previously vaccinated persons are those who have received one of the recommended preexposure or postexposure regimens of HDCV, RVA, or PCEC, or those who received another vaccine and had a documented rabies antibody titer. RIG is unnecessary and should not be administered to these persons because an anamnestic response will follow the administration of a booster regardless of the prebooster antibody titer.

Information regarding the availability of rabies vaccine and/or RIG is available by contacting Connaught Laboratories, Inc. at 1.800.VACCINE (822.2463).

Information regarding control of rabies, rabies vaccine or rabies in North Dakota is available at:

<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm53d402a1.htm>

<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/00056176.htm>

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvrd/rabies/Ques&Ans/q&a.htm>

<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5309a1.htm>

<http://www.health.state.nd.us/disease/Rabies/default.htm>

Please contact the North Dakota Department of Health at 800.472.2180 or 701.328.2378 if you have any questions regarding this issue.

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, and hospital public information officers.