

MAINE PUBLIC HEALTH ALERT NETWORK SYSTEM



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(Formerly Bureau of Health)
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****ADVISORY – Important Information****

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TO: Veterinarians; Hospitals; Public Health-Required
FROM: Dora Anne Mills, M.D., M.P.H., Public Health Director
SUBJECT: Continued Decrease in Human Rabies Vaccine Supply
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Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (Maine CDC)
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Continued Decrease in Human Rabies Vaccine Supply

Background:

Rabies vaccine for humans in the United States is provided by two manufacturers: Sanofi Pasteur produces IMOVAX® and Novartis produces RabAvert®. It is anticipated that a vaccine supply shortage will continue through mid-to-late 2009.

Recommendations Regarding Post-Exposure Prophylaxis:

- ⇒ To obtain IMOVAX® rabies vaccine **you must first contact the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) by calling 1-800-821-5821 so that a risk-assessment can be conducted** for the suspected exposure.
- ⇒ If the Maine CDC determines that rabies post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) is indicated, they will provide you with a passcode to place on the Sanofi Pasteur Rabies Post-Exposure Form. The form must be filled out in its entirety, including the required physician's signature and passcode. Please contact Sanofi Pasteur at 1-800-VACCINE to obtain the required form.
- ⇒ For post-exposure prophylaxis, effective immediately, Novartis will no longer be shipping supplies of RabAvert®.

Persons with possible rabies exposure should be evaluated as soon as possible by a health-care provider. Since PEP is an urgent medical issue but not an emergency, it can be delayed until animal rabies testing or clinical observation is completed. This approach not only limits inappropriate administration of PEP, but is also cost-saving and conserves limited resources.

Recommendations Regarding PRE-Exposure Prophylaxis:

No pre-exposure prophylaxis requests are being filled by either manufacturer at this time.

For More Information:

Maine CDC epidemiologists are available 24/7 at 1-800-821-5821 to respond to concerns and inquiries regarding rabies prophylaxis.

The Federal CDC continues to provide frequent updates on vaccine supplies at: www.cdc.gov/rabies. The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) human rabies prevention recommendations outline animal exposures associated with the risk of rabies: <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5703a1.htm>.