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VETERINARY ADVISORY Updates to Indiana's Rabies Control Protocol

(28 August 2017)

Rabies is consistently a common topic of inquiries from veterinary clinics, as well as the public, to the Indiana State Board of Animal Health (BOAH). Beginning July 1, some aspects of Indiana's rabies rules changed to align with the most recent edition of the *Compendium of Animal Rabies Control and Prevention*. This Advisory outlines protocols for various scenarios; changes to Indiana's Rabies Rule are in **bold**.

Rabies Vaccination Requirements

- All dogs, cats and ferrets 3 months-of-age and older must be vaccinated according to product label.
- 3-year and 1-year products are recognized. Boosters should be given according to the label. In most cases, this means an initial booster 1 year after the first vaccination, regardless of the product.
- If an animal that was vaccinated in the past is overdue, give a booster vaccine. The booster will be good for the duration listed on the label.
- Written proof of vaccination must be provided to the animal owner. The veterinarian must retain a copy for his/her records. Local officials may require a copy for local licensing/registration.

Response to Animal-to-Animal Exposure

BITTEN/EXPOSED PET: The following protocols should be followed after a dog, cat or ferret is exposed/potentially exposed to an unknown (wild) animal or confirmed rabies-positive animal:

- *Dogs and cats current on vaccination:* Give a booster vaccination and observe for **45 days**.
- *Vaccinated dogs and cats overdue:* Give a booster, then observe for **45 days**.
- *Unvaccinated dogs and cats when biting animal is unknown or not available for observation or testing:* Euthanasia is recommended. Alternative option: Administer vaccine within 96 hours of exposure, then quarantine and observe for **4 months** after exposed/potentially exposed (previously was 6 months).
- *Vaccinated dogs and cats with no proof of vaccination:* **In the absence of documentation of vaccination status, treat as unvaccinated.** Alternative option: Collect a serologic sample for titer testing within 96 hours of exposure and vaccinate. Collect a second sample for titer testing 5 to 7 days later.
 - A. *With an adequate anamnestic response, the animal is considered overdue:* Booster and observe for **45 days**.

B. In the absence of an anamnestic response, the animal is considered unvaccinated:

Place under strict quarantine for 4 months.

NOTE: Kansas State's laboratory is the only facility that performs rabies titer testing.

www.ksvdl.org/rabies-laboratory/favn-test/index.html

- *Unvaccinated ferrets:* Vaccinate and quarantine for 6 months.
- *Ferrets overdue:* Consult with BOAH.

BITING PET: BOAH policy recommends the following after a pet bites/attacks another animal:

- Confine and observe for 10 days. *Unvaccinated pets:* Administer vaccine at the end of 10 days.
NOTE: Local ordinances may stipulate where/how confinement must occur.
- If animal dies or is euthanized within the 10-day period, submit head for testing.

Response to Human Exposure/Bite

Humans should seek medical attention and consult with the local health department. All animal bites to people are reportable to the local health department.

- Dogs, cats and ferrets current on vaccination: Observe for 10 days.
- Dogs, cats and ferrets not vaccinated or no vaccination history is available: Quarantine and observe for 10 days. Vaccinate after 10-day strict quarantine.
- Other species: Consult with the Indiana State Department of Health. Extra-label use of vaccine is not recognized as valid in any species; animals are considered unvaccinated.
- Animal (any species) dies or is euthanized: Submit the head to the Indiana State Health Department laboratory for testing.
- Animal (any species) shows signs of rabies: Euthanize the animal and submit the head to the Indiana State Health Department laboratory for testing.
- Unknown (not in possession for observation or testing) animal, wild or domestic: Consult physician; post-exposure treatment may be recommended.

Confinement

The state of Indiana does not specify where or in what facilities animals need to be confined. Local ordinances or officials may have specific locations or facility requirements for confinement.

Rabies Information Resource

BOAH offers additional information, including fact sheets and links to online laboratory forms and phone numbers at: www.in.gov/boah/2337.htm.

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