

Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH)

Species Considerations For Rabies Testing

Category 1

ALWAYS test following human or domestic animal exposure

Species in this group are either known rabies vectors or are considered likely to have the potential to transmit rabies.

Bat
Bear
Beaver
Bobcat
Coyote
Fisher
Fox
Otter
Raccoon
Skunk
Woodchuck

Category 2

Test following human or domestic animal exposure if 10-day quarantine is not possible or not appropriate (i.e., animal is already ill)

Species in this group can only transmit rabies up to 10 days before showing symptoms.

Cat
Cow
Dog
Ferret

Category 3

Requires MDPH or MDAR* approval for testing (handled case by case)

Species in this group are occasionally found to be rabid although bites from these animals have never resulted in a human case of rabies in the United States.

Alpaca/llama
Chinchilla
Deer
Domestic/pet rabbit
Goat
Guinea pig
Horse
Mink
Moose
Muskrat
Opossum
Pig
Porcupine
Sheep
Squirrel
Weasel

Category 4

Rabies testing NOT indicated

Species in this group are virtually never found to be rabid and bites from these animals have never resulted in a human case of rabies in the United States.

Chipmunk
Gerbil
Hamster
Mole
Mouse
Rat
Shrew
Vole
**Wild rabbit/
Cottontail**

For exposures involving an animal species not specifically listed OR unusual circumstances, consultation with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health Division of Epidemiology and Immunization is available 24/7 at 617-983-6800.

*Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources:
617-626-1786