

# Patient Care Sheet: Domestic (dog/cat/ferret) Animal Exposure Wound Public Health Follow-up

You have reported that you have had a wound with exposure to saliva from a domestic dog, cat or ferret. There are three main categories of potential infection from this type of injury:

1. **Skin/wound infection** - caused by bacteria in the animal's mouth. Your healthcare provider will assess and treat. Please monitor the wound for any signs of infection such as increasing redness or discharge, and follow your provider's instructions for care and reassessment.
2. **Tetanus infection** – caused by bacteria that survive for long periods as spores in dirt. This infection is preventable by immunization. Your healthcare provider will check to make sure your tetanus immunization is up to date and refer you to public health if needed.
3. **Rabies infection** - although extremely rare in Alberta, it is caused by a virus that is carried in bats in Alberta and can be potentially transmitted to other mammals such as your pet (and humans) via saliva. In rare situations and in consultation with a public health professional, rabies shots (immunoglobulin and vaccine) may be recommended. However, the most important next steps you need to take are monitoring your pet as outlined below.

## MONITOR YOUR PET

### Observe your pet for 10 days:

- Keep your pet confined on your property, away from other people and animals
- Keep your pet indoors at night where possible

### Monitor your pet for the following changes in behavior or appearance:

- Becoming more aggressive, or anxious, and may attack or bite without provocation.
- Acting unusually tired or shy, weight loss, lack of coordination, paralysis, or drooling

## ACT

- If your pet dies, escapes, or becomes ill at any time during the 10 day observation period, please report these circumstances immediately to Environmental Public Health via the contact number below.
- Please do not euthanize your pet prior to the completion of the 10 day observation period. If there are extenuating circumstances where this is necessary, please contact Environmental Public Health via contact number below for advice prior to euthanizing.

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Contact us at 1-833-476-4743 or [submit a request online](#) at [ahs.ca/eph](https://ahs.ca/eph).

PUB-0445-201906

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