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MINISTRY OF
HEALTH AND
FAMILY WELFARE



Communications Toolkit for Rabies Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis Vaccination in High-Risk Groups



**National Rabies Control Program
Centre for One Health
National Centre for Disease Control
Directorate General of Health Services
Ministry of Health & Family Welfare
Government of India**



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About the document

Rabies is among the deadliest zoonotic diseases, yet it is entirely preventable through timely vaccination and awareness. In India, the disease continues to pose a significant public health challenge, particularly for individuals in high-risk occupations such as veterinary professionals, animal handlers, wildlife staff, and laboratory workers. Their constant exposure to animals makes them vulnerable, highlighting the importance of pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) vaccination as a critical preventive measure.

The toolkit has been designed to guide state and district health officials, frontline health workers, and program managers in promoting and implementing PrEP vaccination. It provides practical resources such as standard operating procedures for vaccination camps, training guidelines, communication strategies, frequently asked questions, and IEC materials that can be easily adapted for local contexts. By mapping and targeting high-risk groups, strengthening preventive measures, and enhancing community awareness, the toolkit aims to build capacity across all levels of health systems.

Ultimately, this resource is not only a manual for technical implementation but also a communication bridge to dispel myths, answer common queries, and encourage uptake of PrEP vaccination. Its goal is to empower stakeholders at every level to take proactive action in protecting high-risk groups, thereby contributing to the larger vision of rabies elimination in India.



Introduction

Pre-exposure prophylaxis vaccination plays a critical role in mitigating the risk of rabies, an inherently fatal zoonotic ailment. Addressing the needs of high-risk populations, whose professional engagements predispose them to animal and viral exposure, demands a proactive and meticulous approach to vaccination. This toolkit contains resources, a fact sheet and IEC material that can be used to create awareness regarding the pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) vaccination for rabies. The goal is to empower state and district health officials with resources to reduce the risk of rabies transmission for high-risk groups.

The objectives behind creating a communications toolkit around pre-exposure prophylaxis vaccination rabies:

- **Improved awareness and information:** The toolkit contains key information in an accessible format, which can be used to target high-risk individuals and groups and promote PrEP vaccination.
- **Strengthen preventive measures:** The toolkit offers guidance for frontline health workers on spreading awareness about rabies PrEP and setting up a vaccination camp, key preventive measures to mitigate the spread of rabies transmission among highly susceptible groups.
- **Capacity-building:** The toolkit aims to equip frontline health workers with knowledge and resources to map high-risk groups, offer information about PrEP and its benefits, and successfully set up vaccination camps. It can also be utilized by program officers to organize the PrEP camps for high-risk groups.

2 Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for PrEP Vaccination Camp

This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) explains the structured coordination of vaccination campaigns for high-risk groups with a focus on pre-exposure prophylaxis.

2.1 Mapping of High-Risk Groups:

Identify and categorize high-risk groups based on their occupational exposure to animals and rabies.

High-Risk Groups

- Veterinary officers
- Para-vet staff
- Veterinary assistants
- Dog catchers
- Dog handlers
- Pet animal shop owners
- Supporting staff in animal care facilities
- Wildlife officials and staff
- Laboratory technicians and microbiologists working in Rabies diagnostic laboratories.
- Staff working in veterinary colleges and hospitals.
- Hospital staff, clinicians, staff nurse, support staff attending to a rabies case.



2.2 Manpower and Supervision:

- Constitute two to three teams for a camp based on the intended number of beneficiaries, with each team consisting of:
 - 1 medical officer
 - 2 staff nurses
 - 1 supporting staff
- Roles and responsibilities of respective key personnel for the camp:
 - Medical officer (from the same facility) for technical oversight and adverse reaction management
 - State/District health official (ideally State/ district Nodal Officer of Rabies program or State/ district Epidemiologist) for overall camp planning and logistic coordination (ensuring availability of Anti-Rabies Vaccines and consumables).
 - Development partner representative (working in Rabies elimination) for training, communication strategy, and technical assistance in camp planning.

2.3 Training: Conduct comprehensive trainings for deployed staff which will cover:

- Vaccine dosage and storage guidelines
- Reconstitution procedures
- Vaccination administration techniques
- Management of adverse vaccine effects
- Record-keeping and reporting protocols

2.4 Logistics:

- Communication materials, including posters and banners, to emphasize the need for pre-exposure vaccination.
- Vaccination cards for beneficiaries.
- Auto-disposable syringes, hand gloves, disinfectants, and vaccine carriers.
- Stock Anti Rabies Vaccine in sufficient quantities.
- Other consumables like cotton/tissue paper, hand gloves and biomedical waste disposal bags etc.



3 Vaccination Camp Setup

Establish temporary vaccination posts, ideally within a government health facility, ensuring convenient accessibility for all beneficiaries. Pre-exposure prophylaxis vaccination and communication about upcoming doses should occur at the same site.

4 Data and record-keeping:

- Fill out a vaccination card for each beneficiary, providing one copy to the beneficiary and retaining another copy at the facility.
- Maintain a comprehensive line list of all beneficiaries in a dedicated register.
- A prototype of the vaccination card is available, which can be adapted for different contexts.

The form is titled "National Rabies Control Program RABIES PRE-EXPOSURE PROPHYLAXIS CARD". It includes fields for "Name of Health Facility", "Reg. No.", "Beneficiary Copy", "Name", "Age", "Sex", "Contact", "Department", and "Address". A "Risk of Exposure" section contains checkboxes for various categories: Veterinary officers, Para-vet staff, Veterinary assistants, Dog handlers, Pet animal shop owners, Supporting staff in animal care facilities, Wildlife officials and staff, Staff working in veterinary colleges and hospitals, Laboratory technicians and microbiologists working in Rabies diagnostic laboratories. It also has fields for "Date of Zero Dose", "Pre-Exposure vaccination record Route of Administration", and "Past 1/0 vaccination". A table tracks vaccination progress for "Day 0", "Day 7", and "Day 30/38" with columns for "Date Due", "Date Given", "Vaccine Batch No.", "Vaccine Expiry Date", and "Signature". The form concludes with an "Outcome" section and a signature line for the administrator.

5 Communications resources

5.1 IEC Poster

The IEC poster can be used by district and state health officials to create awareness of the benefits of the PrEP vaccine and the consequences of not vaccinating in advance. It can also be displayed at vaccine camps and other locations where it is visible to high-risk groups.

The poster is available in JPG, PNG format. An open file of the poster is also available which can be adapted for local languages. (INSERT LINK)

The poster should be displayed in the following places:

- I. Veterinary Clinics and Hospitals: Display posters in veterinary clinics and hospitals where veterinary officers and para vets work. These professionals often frequent these facilities and can be reached there.
- I. Animal Control Centers: Place posters in animal control centers where dog catchers and dog handlers are based. These individuals are likely to visit or work at these locations regularly.



2. **Wildlife Reserves and Parks:** Wildlife personnel frequently work in wildlife reserves, parks, and protected areas. Display posters at entrance gates, visitor centers, and administrative offices within these areas.
3. **Government Offices:** Place posters in government offices, such as the offices of the Department of Veterinary, Department of Health, or other relevant agencies. This ensures that high-risk professionals who work in these sectors see the information.
4. **Training Centers:** If there are training centers or institutions that provide education and training to veterinary officers, para vets, and wildlife personnel, display posters in common areas, classrooms, and bulletin boards within these centers.
5. **Online Channels:** Use the digital versions of the posters for online distribution through official websites, social media channels, and email newsletters targeted at these high-risk groups. This can complement physical posters and reach a wider audience.
6. **Public Transportation Hubs:** In areas where public transportation is commonly used by these groups to commute to work, place posters at bus stops, train stations, or other transit hubs.
7. **Community Centers:** If there are community centers or meeting places where these professionals gather for events, conferences, or meetings, display posters in these locations.
8. **Local Pharmacies and Medical Facilities:** High-risk individuals may visit pharmacies and medical facilities for their healthcare needs. Collaborate with these locations to display PrEP awareness posters. **Restaurants and Cafeterias:** If there are eateries or food establishments (functional within the premise of veterinary hospital, colleges, wildlife offices, municipal corporation canteen etc.) frequently visited by these individuals during breaks or off-duty hours, consider placing posters there.



5.2 Frequently Asked Questions -Rabies Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP)

The FAQs are available as a poster, which can be displayed in veterinary offices, MCD office premises, etc. The FAQs are intended to answer questions, address common myths and offer correct information about the vaccine, where to access it, its efficacy, side effects and schedule.

The FAQ poster can serve as a ready reckoner for frontline health workers when they answer queries about rabies pre-exposure prophylaxis.

Q 1. What is rabies pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) vaccination?

A. Rabies PrEP vaccination is a series of vaccines given to individuals who are at an increased risk of exposure to the rabies virus. It helps prepare the immune system to fight the virus if exposed, reducing the severity of the infection.

Q 2. Who should consider getting rabies PrEP vaccination?

A. Individuals at higher risk for rabies exposure include veterinarians, animal handlers, wildlife workers, dog catchers, dog handlers, pet shop owners, and travelers to areas with a high risk of rabies.

Q 3. Is rabies PrEP vaccination effective?

A. Yes, rabies PrEP vaccination is highly effective in preventing rabies infection if administered properly and before exposure to the virus.

Q 4. What is the schedule of Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis Vaccination?

A. Pre-exposure vaccination is administered as one full dose of vaccine 0.1 ml intra-dermally on days 0, 7 and either day 21 or 28.

Q 5. How long does the effect of Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis Vaccination last? Does a person need to take any booster dose?

A. Laboratory staff and others at high continuing risk of exposure should have their neutralizing antibody titres checked every 6 months during the initial two years period after the primary vaccination. If it is less than 0.5 IU/ml, a booster dose of vaccine should be given.

Q 6. Does a person need to take vaccination if exposed to a suspected rabid animal after Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis Vaccination?

A. Individuals who get exposed to a suspected rabid animal after successful pre-exposure immunization requires routine first aid, i.e, wound washing and only two booster injections of vaccine given on days 0 and 3 and no Rabies Immunoglobulin.

Q 7. Can a pregnant or breastfeeding woman take Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis?

A. Yes, rabies PrEP is safe for use among pregnant and breastfeeding women.

Q 8. Where can I get vaccinated for Rabies Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis?

A. The Anti Rabies Vaccination is available at all government health facilities. One can get vaccinated at Public Health Facility, Community Health Facility



and District Hospitals.

Q 9. What are the side effects of PrEP vaccination?

A. Generally, no side effects are observed after PrEP, though mild fever is seen in some cases. Recipients are suggested to rest for 30 minutes to observe any adverse reactions.

Q 10. Is it possible to develop rabies from the vaccination?

A. No. All rabies vaccines for human use are inactivated. Human rabies vaccines undergo a series of quality control tests such as potency, toxicity, safety, and sterility. It is not possible for the rabies vaccination to cause the disease.

The infographic is titled "National Rabies Control Programme RABIES PRE-EXPOSURE PROPHYLAXIS (PrEP) FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS". It features ten questions and answers arranged in two columns. At the bottom, there are three illustrations: a person with a dog, a person with a dog and a child, and a person with a dog and a child. The background is white with a blue border.

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Individuals who get exposed to a suspected rabid animal after successful pre-exposure immunization requires routine first aid, i.e. wound washing and only two booster injections of vaccine given on days 0 and 3 and no Rabies Immunoglobulin.

Q7 Can a pregnant or breast feeding woman take Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis?
Yes, rabies PrEP is safe for use among pregnant and breastfeeding women.

Q8 Where can I get vaccinated for Rabies Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis?
The Anti Rabies Vaccination is available at all government health facilities. One can get vaccinated at Public Health Facility, Community Health Facility and District Hospitals.

Q9 What are the side effects of PrEP vaccination?
Generally no side effects are observed after PrEP, though mild fever is seen in some cases. Recipients are suggested to rest for 30 minutes to observe any reactions.

Q10 Is it possible to develop rabies from vaccination?
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