

## Rabies Information Sheets

### *What is Rabies?*

Rabies is a viral disease that can be transmitted to humans via the bite, lick or scratch of an infected animal. Rabies has a case fatality rate of almost 100% in non-vaccinated persons who do not seek medical treatment following an encounter with an animal.

### *How do you get Rabies?*

The rabies disease is transmitted primarily via the saliva of an infected animal. The animals that are most likely to be carrying the rabies virus include dogs, bats, cats, monkeys, racoons and wolves. In the event that a traveller is bitten, licked or scratched by an animal urgent medical treatment must be sought. The incubation period for rabies can be as low as a week. Some of the rabies endemic countries are: Central America, South America, Africa, China and South East Asia. (This is not a complete list, just brief information for travelers to help them consider being vaccinated.)

### *How do you know if an animal has Rabies?*

No traveller or medical personnel is able to know if an animal has rabies or not. In the event of being licked, bitten or scratched it is presumed that the animal has rabies, and post exposure vaccinating should be commenced as early as possible. Some textbooks recommend that the animal should be captured and monitored. If the animal dies within 10-14 days, then it is confirmed that the animal did have rabies. A traveler should **not** wait to see if the animal dies prior to commencing their post exposure treatment.

### *Can I be vaccinated against Rabies?*

Yes. It is recommended that travellers to rabies endemic areas be vaccinated prior to departure. This vaccination is known as the "pre-exposure" vaccination. It is a course of three injections over the period of a month. This is to protect the traveller in the event of being exposed to the disease if bitten, licked or scratched by a rabid animal.

### *What happens if an animal bites me and I have had the three "pre-exposure" vaccinations?*

If you are bitten by an animal and you have had the "pre-exposure" vaccinations you will still need to seek medical treatment as early as possible. After the incident you will need a further two inoculations of the rabies injections to ensure you do not get rabies.

### *What happens if an animal bites me and I have had the three "pre-exposure" vaccinations?*

If a traveler is bitten by an animal, and has not had the three pre-exposure vaccinations it is recommended that medical attention be sought straight away. Please do not delay medical attention in this circumstance.

*Can you die from Rabies?*

Yes. Rabies can be a fatal disease. It is recommended that travellers be vaccinated against rabies. In the event that a traveller decides not to be vaccinated against rabies and is bitten by an animal while travelling it is advised that prompt medical treatment be sought. If left untreated the disease can be fatal.

*How much does the vaccination cost?*

The cost is \$90.00 (incl GST) per injection. A traveller would need three injections prior to travelling. A booster is required every 2 years for continuous travellers.

*Who can have the vaccinations?*

Persons over the age of 1 year old can have the vaccinations.