

**Ministry of Health
and Long-Term Care****Ministère de la Santé
et des Soins de longue durée**

Chief Medical Officer of Health

Médecin hygiéniste en chef

Public Health Division
11th Floor, Hepburn Block
Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1R3Division de la santé publique
Édifice Hepburn, 11e étage
Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1R3Telephone: (416) 212-3831
Facsimile: (416) 325-8412Téléphone: (416) 212-3831
Télécopieur: (416) 325-8412

August 8, 2008

Dear Doctor:

RE: Bat Rabies Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) Administration Policy Change

This letter is to provide you information regarding the new policy regarding Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care recommendations for rabies PEP administration with regard to bat exposures.

As you may be aware, recent research (pending publication) by Dr. DeSerres of l'Institut National de Santé Publique du Québec has led the province of Quebec to adopt a change in policy that advocates PEP administration only where direct contact with a bat has occurred. The research demonstrated that the risk of acquiring rabies as a result of non-contact bat exposures is extremely low. This is contrary to the current policy found in the Canadian Immunization Guide, 7th Edition, which prescribes PEP administration in instances where contact with a bat cannot be ruled out, including when a bat is found in the same room as a sleeping person, unattended child or cognitively impaired individual.

The decision by Quebec had prompted Ontario to review its PEP administration practices, and following expert advice from the Ontario Provincial Infectious Diseases Advisory Committee (PIDAC), the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care has decided to adopt new recommendations for rabies PEP administration.

The attached provides Ontario's new rabies PEP recommendations in regard to bat exposures. These recommendations should replace any previous recommendations that have been issued by the Ministry in regard to bat exposures. The new recommendations are meant to be used in conjunction with your professional judgement and assessment of individual situations.

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I would appreciate your sharing this information with any staff that should be aware of these new recommendations. Should you have any questions regarding this information, please contact your local public health unit.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "D Williams".

David C. Williams, MD, MHSc, FRCPC
Chief Medical Officer of Health (A)
Associate Chief Medical Officer of Health, Health Protection

Attachments:

- 1) Recommendations for Rabies Post-Exposure Prophylaxis with Respect to Bat Exposures
- 2) Rabies Vaccine Questions and Answers for Health Care Providers