

# Rabies

## How to assess animal bites OR concerns about rabies exposure

### Step 1. Treat wound and administer tetanus vaccination, if required.<sup>1</sup>

### Step 2. Assess risk for rabies exposure.

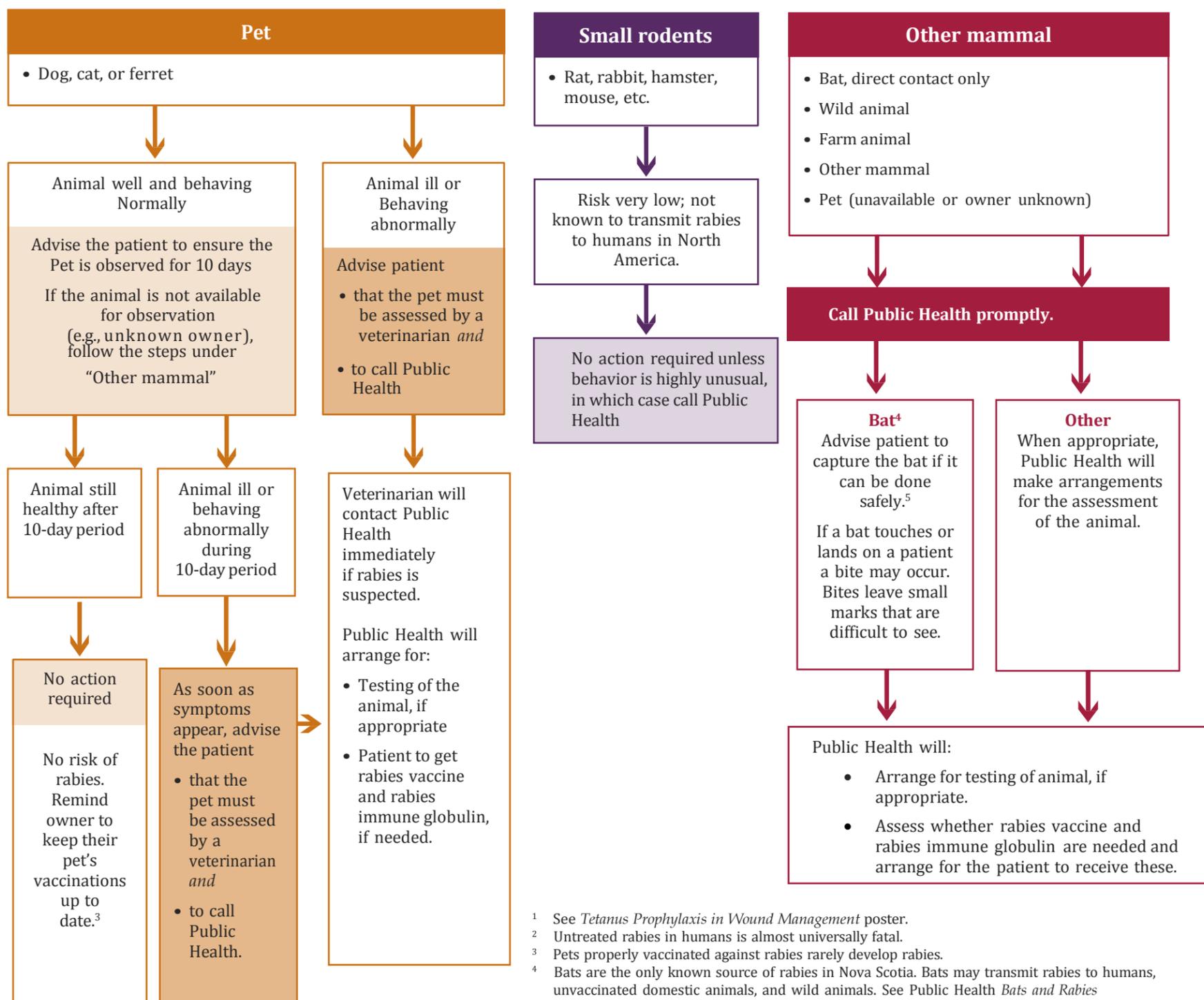
- Was patient exposed to mammal's saliva or central nervous system material via:
  - bite through skin?
  - mucous membranes?
  - non-intact skin?
- Did a bat land on or touch the patient?

If answer is **YES** to any one of these, go to **Step 3**.<sup>2</sup>

If answer is **NO** to both scenarios, no further action required.

Exposure to a mammal's blood, urine, feces, or a skunk's spray does not pose a risk of exposure to rabies.

### Step 3. Assess action required.



<sup>1</sup> See *Tetanus Prophylaxis in Wound Management* poster.

<sup>2</sup> Untreated rabies in humans is almost universally fatal.

<sup>3</sup> Pets properly vaccinated against rabies rarely develop rabies.

<sup>4</sup> Bats are the only known source of rabies in Nova Scotia. Bats may transmit rabies to humans, unvaccinated domestic animals, and wild animals. See Public Health *Bats and Rabies* pamphlet.

<sup>5</sup> The *Bats and Rabies* pamphlet outlines how to safely capture a bat.

If the patient is uncomfortable with contacting a pet owner, contact Public Health.

If there is uncertainty about direct contact with a bat, contact Public Health.

### If you have further questions about assessing animal bites or administering Rabies Immune Globulin:

Call Public Health during regular business hours; if after hours, wait until next business day.

For **URGENT AFTER-HOURS CASES**, call the on-call Medical Officer of Health through QEII Locating at 902-473-2222.

#### Public Health:

**WESTERN ZONE**  
**Annapolis Valley**  
 Tel: 902-542-6310  
 Fax: 902-542-4429  
**South Shore**  
 Tel: 902-543-0850  
 Fax: 902-527-4208  
**South West**  
 Tel: 902-742-7141  
 Fax: 902-742-3083

**NORTHERN ZONE**  
**Colchester-East Hants**  
 Tel: 902-893-5820  
 Fax: 902-893-2614  
**Cumberland**  
 Tel: 902-667-3319  
 Fax: 902-893-2614  
**Pictou**  
 Tel: 902-752-5151  
 Fax: 902-893-2614

**EASTERN ZONE**  
**Cape Breton**  
 Tel: 902-563-2400  
 Fax: 902-563-2005  
**Guysborough and Antigonish**  
 Tel: 902-867-4500 Ext 4800  
 Fax: 902-863-5111

**CENTRAL ZONE**  
**Halifax**  
 Tel: 902-481-5800  
 Fax: 902-481-5889

