



# SPECIAL MEDICAL BULLETIN: RABIES AWARENESS AND PREVENTION

May 2025

## RABIES ALERT: A DEADLY BUT PREVENTABLE DISEASE

A recent case of tragic death of a man in **Cabuyao, Laguna** due to rabies — nine months after he was bitten by a dog in Cavite. The patient did not complete the full course of anti-rabies vaccination, which ultimately led to the fatal outcome.

This heartbreaking incident is a strong reminder of how **dangerous rabies can be** if not treated promptly and properly. CALABARZON — where many of our members live and work — remains one of the **regions with the highest incidence of rabies** in the country.

## What is Rabies?

**Rabies** is a **deadly viral disease** that attacks the brain and nervous system. (Tagalog: *Rabies ay isang nakakamatay na sakit na sanhi ng virus na umaatake sa utak at sistema ng nerbiyos.*)

It is commonly spread through the **bite or scratch of an infected animal**, usually a dog or cat. Once symptoms appear, rabies is almost **always fatal**.

## Who is at Risk?

- People bitten or scratched by animals — especially stray or unvaccinated dogs or cats.
- Those living in areas with poor access to anti-rabies vaccines.
- Children are particularly vulnerable because they often play with animals.

## What Are the Symptoms of Rabies?

• Fever (Lagnat)	• Tingling or pain at the bite site
• Headache (Sakit ng ulo)	• Fear of water ( <i>Hydrophobia</i> )
• Muscle weakness (Panghihina)	• Confusion, agitation, seizures

**Note: Symptoms may appear days to months after the bite.**

## How to Prevent Rabies

### After an animal bite or scratch

- Wash the wound immediately with soap and running water for at least 15 minutes. (*Hugasan agad ang sugat ng sabon at tubig sa loob ng 15 minuto.*)
- Go to the nearest **Animal Bite Center (ABC)** right away.
- **Do not wait for symptoms** to appear — once they do, it's often too late.
- Complete the required **anti-rabies vaccine** series as prescribed.

### For Pet Owners

- Have pets vaccinated against rabies every year.
- Keep them indoors or on a leash when outside.
- Avoid keeping wild or stray animals.

## Where to Get Vaccinated

You may go to the **nearest DOH-accredited Animal Bite Center (ABC)** or government health facility. These centers are usually available in:

- City or Municipal Health Offices
- District or Provincial Hospitals
- Public or Private Hospitals or clinics with ABC services
- Some health centers operated by LGUs (Local Government Units)

If you're covered by **Metrocare**, visit any of our partner clinics or hospitals for consultation and support. Our goal is to keep you healthy and safe all year round.

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[contactus@metrocarehealth.com](mailto:contactus@metrocarehealth.com)