

Topic: Further testing confirmed free-roaming kitten did not have rabies

On July 9th 2025, a free-roaming kitten rescued from roadside in rural Chemainus began experiencing symptoms consistent with rabies. The kitten was euthanized, and test results received on July 21 reported the cat was infected with rabies.

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency's rabies laboratory has since conducted extensive follow up testing and reported a negative rabies test result on August 21. The original test in July was a very rare "false positive" result.

Individuals who received rabies post exposure prophylaxis (RPEP) along with partners are being contacted and a public notification will follow shortly.

In B.C., the only animals that carry rabies are bats and very rarely bat variant rabies spills over into other animals or people. If a patient presents with a history of contact with a bat in BC, or a bite from another mammal that has you concerned about the risk of rabies, please call your local Communicable Disease unit to assess the need for RPEP (after "business" hours, call the on-call Medical Health Officer [MHO]).

Consultation with the Communicable Disease Unit/Medical Health Officer should occur prior to any decision to provide RPEP. Release of rabies vaccine and rabies immune globulin for post exposure prophylaxis is authorized by an MHO, including at hospital pharmacies and public health units.

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