

PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
2023 – PAHAN – 709-07-24 - ADV
Annual Oral Rabies Vaccination in Western
Pennsylvania: Human Implications



DATE:	07/24/2023
TO:	Health Alert Network
FROM:	Debra Bogen, M.D., FAAP, Acting Secretary of Health
SUBJECT:	Annual Oral Rabies Vaccination in Western Pennsylvania: Human Implications
DISTRIBUTION:	Allegheny, Beaver, Crawford, Erie, Fayette, Greene, Lawrence, Mercer, Washington, and Westmoreland Counties
LOCATION:	Western Pennsylvania
STREET ADDRESS:	n/a
COUNTY:	n/a
MUNICIPALITY:	n/a
ZIP CODE:	n/a

This transmission is a “Health Advisory”: provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

HOSPITALS: PLEASE SHARE WITH ALL MEDICAL, PEDIATRIC, INFECTION CONTROL, NURSING, AND LABORATORY STAFF IN YOUR HOSPITAL

EMS COUNCILS: PLEASE DISTRIBUTE AS APPROPRIATE

FQHCs: PLEASE DISTRIBUTE AS APPROPRIATE

LOCAL HEALTH JURISDICTIONS: PLEASE DISTRIBUTE AS APPROPRIATE

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS: PLEASE DISTRIBUTE TO YOUR MEMBERSHIP

The Pennsylvania Department of Health (PADOH) is releasing the following information regarding the 2023 oral raccoon rabies vaccine (ORV) baiting campaign.

This is the 22nd year that federal, state and county agencies are working together to conduct an ORV baiting project in parts of western Pennsylvania during July and August. Distribution of the baits will begin July 31 in Lawrence County and continue through August in various portions of Allegheny, Beaver, Crawford, Erie, Fayette, Greene, Mercer, Washington, and Westmoreland counties. Baits will be distributed from helicopters and low-flying aircraft, as well as by local teams spreading baits by hand. All baiting should be completed by September 1 (weather permitting).

For the third year in a row, two different vaccines will be distributed.

- **Raboral-V-RG** is manufactured by Merial, Inc. (Athens, Georgia) and has been used in the ORV campaign since 2001. The Material Safety Data Sheet is available at https://docs.boehringer-ingenelheim.com/SDS-RABORAL_V-RG_w_bait_US.pdf. Raboral-

V-RG contains live highly attenuated recombinant vaccinia virus. The vaccine is in a heat-sealed plastic packet or “sachet.” The liquid in the sachet is pink in color and the sachet is coated with fishmeal(see photo at end). Since 1990, over 100 million doses of Raboral V-RG animal vaccine have been distributed in the United States. The only two documented human adverse reactions occurred after pet dogs punctured baits and owners (one pregnant and the other on multiple immunosuppressive medications) had direct contact of the vaccine with non-intact skin.

- **ONRAB** is produced by Artemis Technologies, Inc. (Guelph, Ontario, Canada) and is being distributed in Western Pennsylvania for the third year. The Material Safety Data Sheet can be viewed at https://www.ccbh.net/s/ONRAB_MSDS.pdf. The bait consists of a polyvinyl chloride (PVC) blister pack covered with a sweet smelling, dark green, waxy coating. The dark green lid has a label printed in black. The liquid vaccine is colorless (see photo at end). The vaccine is a live virus vaccine that was prepared by inserting a rabies gene into the genome of a human adenovirus type 5 vector. ONRAB is expected to be a safer alternative to Raboral-V-RG given that many humans have immunity to the adenovirus vector. This live virus vaccine could cause an adenovirus infection in a human who accidentally breaks open a bait package if the person is not already immune. However, adenovirus infections are typically mild gastrointestinal or respiratory infections without significant or severe clinical symptoms. ONRAB has been distributed in other states since 2011 with no documented adverse reactions.

For both types of vaccines, the ORV baits are specifically designed to attract wild raccoons. When an animal bites into a bait, the packet ruptures and allows the vaccine to make contact in the animal’s mouth and throat. Animals that have contact with an adequate dose of the vaccine develop antibodies against rabies. The baits have been safety tested in dogs, cats and other domestic animals and should not harm them even if ingested.

Please report any suspected accidental human contact with the vaccine or suspected adverse events to the appropriate local health department or PADOH:

Allegheny County Health Department: 412-350-4046

Erie County Department of Health: 814-451-6700

Beaver, Greene, Fayette, Washington, or Westmoreland Counties (PADOH SW District): 724-830-2701

Crawford, Lawrence, or Mercer Counties (PADOH NW District): 724-662-6068

PADOH toll-free line: 1-877-PA-HEALTH

Consultation is available for human exposures to vaccine and for suspected adverse events. Consultation is particularly important for ocular exposures, for exposed individuals with immune-suppression or immune-deficiency, and for individuals who develop one or more vesicles. Vaccinia immune globulin and anti-viral agents are available if indicated. If you are unable to reach your local health department or district office in a timely manner, consultation is available through the Pennsylvania Department of Health, Division of Infectious Disease Investigations at 717-787-3350.

Although ORV programs have produced very few documented adverse human events anywhere in the world, it is important to educate individuals to avoid contact with bait contents, wash any areas of accidental exposure, and maintain surveillance for adverse events, including vesicles that develop on skin areas exposed to vaccine or at bite wound sites.

A poster alerting residents of baiting areas, a brochure and fact sheets on rabies are available at: <https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/Pages/Rabies.aspx>.

The USDA ORV site is at <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/wildlife-damage/rabies>.



Raboral V-RG sachets



ONRAB packets

Categories of Health Alert messages:

Health Alert: conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory: provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

Health Update: provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.

This information is current as of July 24, 2023, but may be modified in the future.