



Merlin disease code: 07100 Rabies, Human

**CONTACT THE BUREAU OF EPIDEMIOLOGY**

No paper case report form

No Merlin extended data

## Clinical criteria for case classification

Rabies is an acute encephalomyelitis that almost always progresses to coma or death within 10 days after the first symptom.

## Laboratory criteria for case classification

One or more of the following:

- Detection by direct fluorescent antibody of viral antigens in a clinical specimen (preferably the brain or the nerves surrounding hair follicles in the nape of the neck),
- **Or** isolation (in cell culture or in a laboratory animal) of rabies virus from saliva, cerebrospinal fluid (CSF), or central nervous system tissue,
- **Or** identification of a rabies-neutralizing antibody titer  $\geq 5$  (complete neutralization) in the serum or CSF of an unvaccinated person.

## Epidemiological criteria for case classification

Not applicable.

## Case classification

Confirmed:

A clinically compatible illness in a person with laboratory criteria.

## Criteria to distinguish a new case from previous reports

Not applicable.

## Comments

Laboratory confirmation by all of the above methods is strongly recommended. CDC requests the following specimens: CSF, serum, or saliva (not sputum), biopsy of skin from the back of the neck just above hairline. Neck biopsy and saliva specimens should be sent packed in dry ice.