


# Algorithm for Rabies Postexposure Prophylaxis (PEP) for Healthcare Providers and Public Health Professionals in Maryland

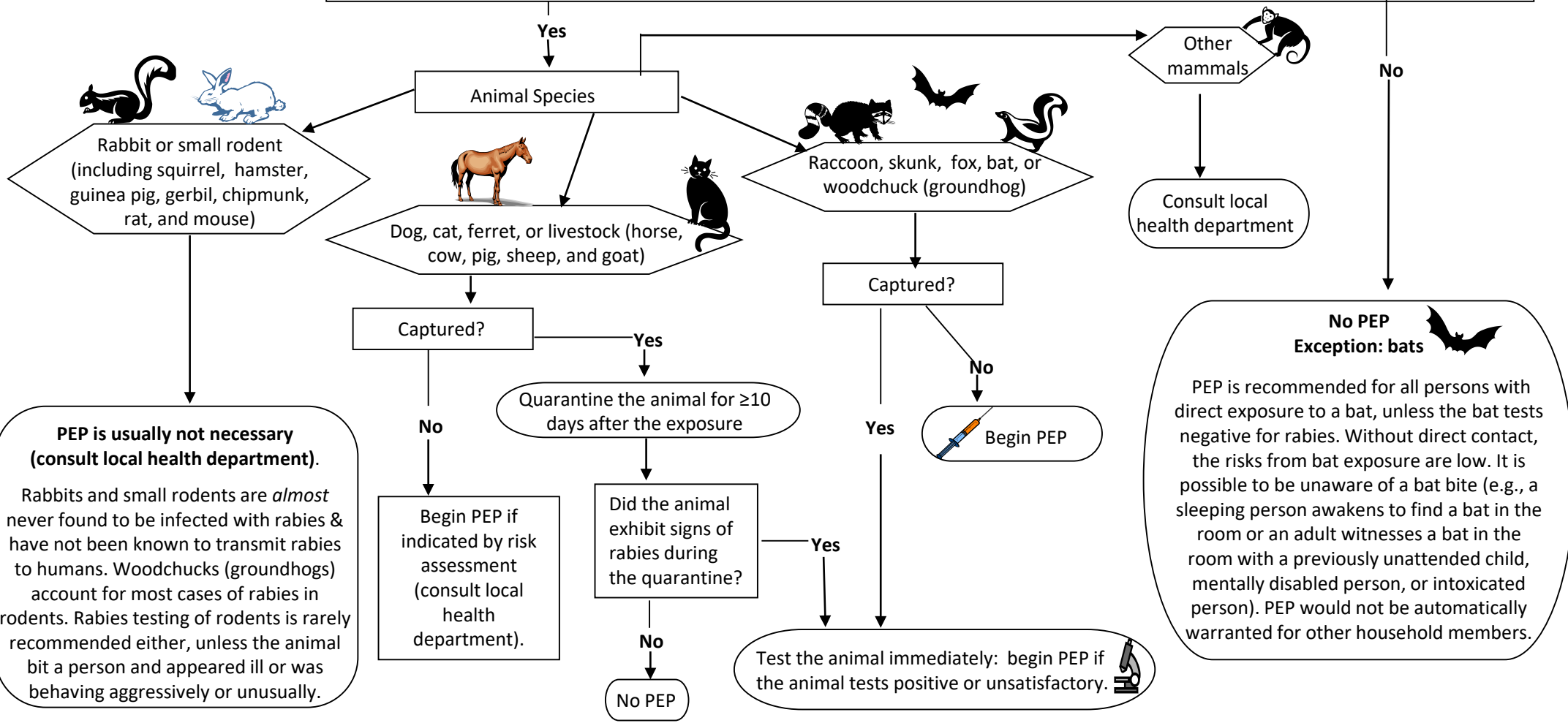
Maryland Department of Health, Infectious Disease Epidemiology and Outbreak Response Bureau, Center for Zoonotic and Vector-borne Diseases 2021

In some situations, it may be appropriate to initiate PEP before test results are available (such as for a bite to the face by a stray animal or rabies vector species); consult your local health department.

 Report exposure to local health department, animal control, or police

**Perform Risk Assessment**  
Risk assessment includes species, immunization status, health status, type and circumstances of exposure (bite vs. non-bite, provoked vs. unprovoked), and availability of animal for quarantine or testing.

Was the person bitten or was an open wound or mucous membrane (eyes, nose, mouth) exposed to the saliva or neural tissue of a mammal?



**PEP is usually not necessary (consult local health department).**  
Rabbits and small rodents are *almost* never found to be infected with rabies & have not been known to transmit rabies to humans. Woodchucks (groundhogs) account for most cases of rabies in rodents. Rabies testing of rodents is rarely recommended either, unless the animal bit a person and appeared ill or was behaving aggressively or unusually.

**No PEP  
Exception: bats**  
PEP is recommended for all persons with direct exposure to a bat, unless the bat tests negative for rabies. Without direct contact, the risks from bat exposure are low. It is possible to be unaware of a bat bite (e.g., a sleeping person awakens to find a bat in the room or an adult witnesses a bat in the room with a previously unattended child, mentally disabled person, or intoxicated person). PEP would not be automatically warranted for other household members.