

Rabies Availability and Assistance

For VNDL Students Interested in Receiving the Rabies Vaccine Series and Being Exempt from the Mitigation Policy

Reasoning/Justification:

- Rabies is a viral disease with close to 100% mortality rate in people or animals that contract this disease. The program's curriculum exposes students to a variety of animals in different settings for hands-on clinical experience and, in many cases, students may come in contact with animals that may not have been vaccinated against rabies or that have unknown vaccination histories.
- The AVMA (CVTEA) accrediting body requires that all students in accredited programs be vaccinated against rabies or the program must implement a comprehensive rabies mitigation protocol. Our program has developed a comprehensive rabies mitigation protocol and will not be requiring students to receive the pre-exposure rabies vaccination.
- By receiving the vaccine while in the program, students will be well prepared for the workforce and possibly have an advantage over other applicants who have not received the vaccine series.

Benefits of pre-exposure rabies vaccination for the veterinary team:

- Pre-exposure rabies vaccination **does not eliminate the need for additional treatment after a rabies exposure**. It does eliminate the need for post-exposure rabies immunoglobulin administration and decreases the number of post-exposure doses of vaccine needed. Pre-exposure prophylaxis also may provide protection if post-exposure rabies treatment is delayed or if rabies exposure is unrecognized.
- The active antibody response develops in approximately 7–10 days, and detectable rabiesvirus neutralizing antibodies generally persist for several years. The duration of protection varies, so regular titers are necessary to assess the need for a booster vaccination. According to the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) guidelines: "Although virus neutralizing antibody levels might not definitively determine a person's susceptibility or protection from a rabies virus exposure, titers in persons at risk for exposure are used to monitor the relative rabies immune status over time. To ensure the presence of a primed immune response over time among persons at higher than normal risk for exposure, titers should be checked periodically, with booster doses administered only as needed."

What is expected from the student?

- To be exempt from the VNDL Program Rabies Mitigation Policy, those students admitted to the VNDL Program will be required to receive the pre-exposure rabies series prior to enrolling in the VM 22300 Pharmacy Mentorship Course. Most students register for VM 22300 somewhere between semester 3 and semester 5 in the plan of study dependent upon student pace of program completion.

Students will be asked to submit a completed Docusign form stating that they have received the vaccine series.

- Failure to complete the vaccination series or secure approval for exemption before the start of the VM 22300 course will require those students to abide by the mitigation policy.

What does the vaccine series look like?

- The series consists of 2 doses and are given on days 0 and 7. The two products available are RabAvert[®], chick embryo origin or Imovax[®], human diploid origin.
- After the 2-dose series, all students are required to do one of the following:
 1. One-time blood test antibody titer during years 1-3 after primary series (one booster dose of vaccine if titer < 0.5 mIU/mL)
 2. Third dose of vaccine between day 21 and 3 years after completion of primary series

What is the associated cost with this requirement?

- The approximate cost of each vaccination is \$280 to \$360 per dose, resulting in an overall cost of \$560 to \$720 for the 2-dose series.
- The RFFIT blood test (Rapid Fluorescent Focus Inhibition Test, which measures the level of rabies antibodies in international units/milliliter) at LabCorp cash cost is \$87 (test code 083885). The cost could vary depending upon your medical and laboratory options. If the test result is negative or below the recommended level for protection, however, another booster vaccine (and the costs associated) would be required

Where can I go to receive the vaccines?

- **If you currently have health insurance or a relationship with a doctor, we recommend starting here. Important things to clarify with your provider.**
 - You are entering a high risk profession
 - This is considered preventative care
 - Pre-exposure vaccination for veterinarians, veterinary technicians or others on the veterinary team can be ordered by a physician or arranged through your local or state health department. Insurance coverage varies, so ask your provider whether your policy includes coverage, either full or partial.

*If necessary, a letter to your insurance company justifying the need for pre-exposure rabies immunization can be provided

- **For eligible students Sanofi Pasteur offers a patient assistant program:**
 - Patient assistance programs that provide medications to uninsured or underinsured patients are available for rabies vaccine and immune globulin.
 - Sanofi Pasteur’s Patient Assistance Program (providing Imogam® human rabies immune globulin and Imovax® rabies vaccine, as well as other vaccines) is now administered through the Franklin Group. A healthcare professional or patient can either contact the Franklin Group directly or call the customer service team (1-800-VACCINE) who will transfer them to the Franklin Group. The Franklin Group will review the application against the eligibility criteria. For more information about the program or to request an application, please contact the Sanofi Pasteur, Inc. Patient Assistance Program (Franklin Group) at 1-866-801- 5655. Instructions and request forms are also available at the Sanofi Patient Connection external iconwebsite.
- **Self- Pay options-** The student may pay for the vaccine then apply for reimbursement from their insurance company, but it is recommended to contact the company first to attempt to arrange payment.
 - Contact a local pharmacy and see if they would administer the vaccination if prescribed by a primary care physician
 - Passport Health: Please visit [Rabies Vaccine for Humans | Passport Health \(passporthealthusa.com\)](https://www.passporthealthusa.com) – A discount coupon for \$50 off can be sent to students who select this option
 - County health departments
 - Contact a local travel clinic
 - Contact a local public health unit

More information regarding rabies in the U.S. can be obtained from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention website:

- <http://www.cdc.gov/rabies/index.html>
- https://www.who.int/health-topics/rabies#tab=tab_1
- <https://www.cdc.gov/rabies/location/usa/surveillance/index.html>

Guidance from the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) is as follows:

<https://www.avma.org/resources-tools/one-health/rabies-pre-exposure-vaccination-and-titers-veterinarians>

Rabies exposure is an **occupational hazard for veterinary professionals**, and preventive measures are necessary to protect the veterinary team. Pre-exposure rabies vaccination provides additional protection for at-risk veterinarians, veterinary technicians, and other team members. But vaccination doesn't replace good preventive measures such as **personal protective equipment**, and safe procedures for animal and specimen handling.