



## ALERT FOR CLINICIANS

### Counterfeit batches of rabies vaccine in India

#### KEY POINTS

- Counterfeit Abhayrab® rabies vaccine has been reported circulating in India since 01 November 2023.
- People who received Abhayrab® or an unknown rabies vaccine brand in India from 01 November 2023 onwards may not be fully protected against rabies and are recommended to receive replacement doses.
- Clinicians are advised to:
  1. Refer to the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) [statement](#).
  2. Assess and advise patients who have received rabies vaccine in India since 01 November 2023, including reviewing available vaccination records or documentation.
  3. Contact [Public Health](#) during business hours for further guidance or to access replacement vaccine doses for Abhayrab® or unknown rabies vaccines received in India since 01 November 2023.

#### Current situation

- ATAGI has been alerted to counterfeit Abhayrab® rabies vaccine circulating in India since November 2023.
- Abhayrab® is not available in Australia, but those who received counterfeit vaccine in India may not be fully protected against rabies and are recommended replacement doses with an Australian-registered vaccine.
- Public Health has contacted people known to have received Abhayrab® or an unknown rabies vaccine in India since 01 November 2023 as part of **post-exposure** prophylaxis, to provide individual advice.
- People who received pre-exposure prophylaxis overseas, or a full post-exposure course overseas or in another state, may not be known to WA [public health units](#) and could present to general practice for advice.

#### Recommended actions

- Consider any dose of Abhayrab® or an unknown vaccine brand administered in India from 01 November 2023 onwards as invalid. As it is difficult to verify whether genuine or counterfeit vaccine was administered, all Abhayrab® doses should be considered as potentially counterfeit.
- Recommend replacement of doses with a valid Australian-registered rabies vaccine (e.g. Rabipur® or Verorab®) in line with the [ATAGI statement](#).
- Contact [Public Health](#) during business hours for further guidance or to access replacement vaccine doses for Abhayrab® or unknown rabies vaccines received in India since 01 November 2023.
- People who completed a **full** rabies vaccine course in a country other than India, including Australia, or have documented evidence of receiving a different rabies vaccine brand are **not** impacted.

#### Background

- Rabies is caused by exposure to saliva or neural tissue from an animal infected with rabies virus or other lyssaviruses, such as through bites or scratches, or direct contact of mucosal surfaces with infected saliva.
- Rabies is invariably fatal; symptoms of rabies can occur within days or up to several years after exposure.
- Patients may require rabies vaccine and immunoglobulin for post-exposure prophylaxis if they are bitten or scratched by a bat anywhere in the world (including in Australia) or by a land-dwelling mammal overseas.
- Post-exposure rabies vaccine (including replacement doses) and human rabies immunoglobulin are funded by WA Health for rabies exposures overseas, or to bat lyssaviruses overseas or within Australia. Approval from [Public Health](#) is required prior to administration, including for cache stock held at selected sites.
- See [The Australian Immunisation Handbook](#) and [Rabies and other lyssavirus infection](#) for further details.

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