



RABIES WATCH

YOUR SOURCE FOR RABIES AWARENESS AND EDUCATION

FALL 2017, Issue #6

World Rabies Day: September 28, 2017



RABIES: ZERO BY 30

A Day of Global Focus on the Continuing Threat of Rabies

No doubt about it—the US has made remarkable progress in controlling rabies over the past several decades.¹ But this is no time to become complacent. The risk of human exposure to this virus through an infected animal remains all too real in the US.^{1,2} Additionally, with global travel in the 21st century, Americans are venturing into parts of the world in which rabies is still endemic and could be returning home unaware that they have been exposed to the rabies virus.^{1,2}

This is an urgent medical situation since once symptomatic disease develops in a human, rabies is nearly always fatal.² That also means that family and friends of these global travelers and healthcare professionals who have provided care to these travelers could all be exposed to the rabies virus.³ Therefore, we in the US need to remain vigilant and join with people around the world who want to eradicate rabies as a human disease. That is what World Rabies Day is all about—putting an end to the unnecessary suffering that rabies causes.⁴

Transmission of rabies from dogs to humans has been essentially eliminated in the US through the elimination of the canine rabies virus variant.² Nonetheless, human cases continue to occur here among people who are exposed to infected wildlife, especially bats.² In addition, Americans who travel to other countries in which canine rabies continues to be endemic may be unknowingly exposed to the rabies virus and bring deadly rabies virus infection back with them.^{2,3} Surprisingly, nearly one-third of human rabies cases in the US from 2003 to 2015 were diagnosed in people who had been exposed to rabies outside of the US and its territories.² The Centers for Disease



RABIES WATCH

Control and Prevention (CDC) note that, regardless of type of exposure, human fatalities due to rabies continue to occur among people who were either unaware of their exposure incident or did not take an exposure incident seriously enough to seek appropriate medical attention.^{2,5}

Nearly one-third of human rabies cases diagnosed in the US from 2003 to 2015 were in people who had been exposed to the virus while traveling outside the country and its territories.²

To address this situation and help the rest of the world combat rabies, the Global Alliance for Rabies Control (GARC) created and coordinates World Rabies Day, which occurs on September 28 annually.⁴ The theme of World Rabies Day 2017 is “Rabies: Zero by 30,” which supports the common goal of ending human deaths due to canine-transmitted rabies by the year 2030, a goal shared by GARC, the World Health Organization, the World Organisation for Animal Health, and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization.⁴ GARC developed a campaign called “End Rabies Now” to highlight this work and engage partners and supporters around the world to get involved.⁶

GARC’s “End Rabies Now” campaign that supports World Rabies Day has a simple, yet powerful call to action against rabies: “99.9% fatal, 100% preventable.”⁶

World Rabies Day: The First and Only Global Day of Action and Awareness for Rabies Prevention

To achieve the goal of eliminating human deaths due to canine rabies, GARC coordinates World Rabies Day activities and supports healthcare professionals and their organizations in hosting their own local World Rabies Day events.⁴ The GARC website (<https://rabiesalliance.org/world-rabies-day/event-resources>) provides free access to a comprehensive toolkit, logos in multiple languages to download and use, additional awareness resources, and free online educational courses about rabies and rabies control that can be used by event hosts to meet local needs.⁷

RABIES WATCH

The screenshot shows the website for the Global Alliance for Rabies Control. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for 'EVENT LOGIN', 'DONATE TO GARC', and social media icons for Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube. A search bar is also present. Below the navigation bar is a banner for 'WORLD RABIES DAY SEPTEMBER 28' with the slogan 'RABIES: ZERO BY 30'. The main content area features a sidebar with a 'WORLD RABIES DAY' menu containing links to '2017 World Rabies Day Awards', 'Register a World Rabies Day Event', 'World Rabies Day Events', 'World Rabies Day event resources', and 'World Rabies Day logos'. The main content area is titled 'World Rabies Day event resources' and includes a paragraph: 'GARC's World Rabies Day resources are available for you to download and use - we hope they help to make your World Rabies Day event even more successful!'. Below this are four resource cards: 'Event toolkit' (with a folder icon), 'World Rabies Day logos' (with a table icon), 'Awareness resources' (with an icon of two people), and 'Free rabies courses' (with a question mark icon). A small blue box on the left side of the main content area contains the World Rabies Day logo and the text: 'Get involved - hold an event, get resources, nominate a rabies champion!'.

Newsletter feeds and updates about World Rabies Day 2017 are available through Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/GlobalAllianceforRabiesControl>) and Twitter (<https://twitter.com/RabiesAlliance>).

The “End Rabies Now” campaign cites an African proverb to inspire this global effort against the threat of rabies: “If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.”⁶

For More Information

World Rabies Day: <https://rabiesalliance.org/world-rabies-day>

GARC: <https://rabiesalliance.org/>

End Rabies Now: <https://endrabiesnow.org/>



RABIES WATCH

REFERENCES

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Human rabies. https://www.cdc.gov/rabies/location/usa/surveillance/human_rabies.html. Updated September 21, 2015. Accessed June 16, 2017. 2. Birhane MG, Cleaton JM, Monroe BP, et al. Rabies surveillance in the United States during 2015. *J Am Vet Med Assoc*. 2017;250(10):1117-1130. 3. Virginia Department of Health. Health officials investigate rare human case of rabies. <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/news/public-relations-contacts/news-releases/2017-statewide-news-releases/health-officials-investigate-rare-human-case-of-rabies/>. May 12, 2017. Accessed June 6, 2017. 4. Global Alliance for Rabies Control. World Rabies Day. <https://rabiesalliance.org/world-rabies-day>. Accessed June 16, 2017. 5. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Rabies in the U.S. <https://www.cdc.gov/rabies/location/usa/index.html>. Updated April 22, 2011. Accessed June 2, 2017. 6. Global Alliance for Rabies Control. About End Rabies Now. <https://endrabiesnow.org/about>. Accessed June 16, 2017. 7. Global Alliance for Rabies Control. World Rabies Day event resources. <https://rabiesalliance.org/world-rabies-day/event-resources>. Accessed June 16, 2017.

This article may be downloaded, printed, and distributed freely without copyright restriction.
For more information, go to www.rabieswatch.com

FALL 2017, Issue #6