Appendix 3. Post-exposure management algorithm for potential exposure to lyssaviruses from bats in Australia or overseas

Potential exposure from a bat (Australia or overseas)

Category I
- Touching or feeding animals, licks on intact skin
- Exposure to blood, urine or faeces or to an animal that has been dead for >4 hours.

Category II or III
- Nibbling of uncovered skin, any scratches or abrasions with/without bleeding, single or multiple transdermal bites or scratches, contamination of mucous membrane with saliva from licks, or licks on broken skin

Previously immunised

Previously immunised
- No prophylaxis is required if contact history is reliable

Vaccinate
- Both immunocompetent and immunocompromised persons – 2 doses delivered IM on days 0 and 3. Human rabies immunoglobulin (HRIG) is not indicated.

Vaccinate and administer HRIG
- HRIG is administered only once, and as soon as possible after the initiation of PEP (HRIG is not indicated beyond the 7th day after the 1st vaccine dose day 0).
- Rabies vaccination is 4 doses administered IM on days 0, 3, 7 and 14.

Non-immune

Non-immune
- Ongoing occupational exposure risk

Perform serology
- Every 6 months for laboratory staff at risk
- Every 2 years for veterinary workers, bat handlers or any other workers who are likely to need to handle bats.

VNA < 0.5 IU/mL
- Give a single booster dose
- If further exposure give PEP as above

VNA ≥ 0.5 IU/mL
- No further action until either
  - exposure, then give PEP as above, OR
  - time period elapses as above for serology – undertake VNA serology

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§ Immunocompromised persons, not previously vaccinated, should receive 5 doses of vaccine on days 0, 3, 7, 14 and 28. Serology should be checked 14 to 21 days post dose 5 and a further dose offered if the result is <0.5 IU/mL. In immunocompromised persons, HRIG should be administered if a Category II or III exposure.

§§ Immunocompromised persons, previously immunised, should have serological testing 14 to 21 days after the 2nd dose to confirm acceptable VNA titre levels. If the result is <0.5 IU/mL, expert advice should be sought regarding the total number of doses required for PEP.

* If in doubt, treat as non-immune.

† Previously immunised – documentation of a completed recommended PreP or PEP rabies vaccine regimen. This is irrespective of the time period since the last dose was administered. This may either be a completed primary pre-exposure course or post-exposure course and includes those where subsequent boosting has occurred or documented rabies antibody (VNA) titre of ≥0.5 IU/mL

‡ Non-immune – person who has never received pre- or post-exposure immunisation with rabies vaccine or has had incomplete/inadequate primary vaccination course