



RABIES VACCINE

22 APRIL 2025

Rabies is a fatal, but preventable, viral infection that is endemic in South Africa. Transmission of rabies virus to humans, occurs through exposure to the saliva of an infected animal (mostly domestic dogs, but other animals may also be affected by rabies), most commonly through bites but can occur through scratches, abrasions and licks on broken skin or mucosal membranes (for example the insides of eyes, nose and mouth).

Pre-exposure prophylaxis is recommended for individuals at high or continual risk of exposure to the rabies virus. This includes persons who may be at risk of exposure due to their occupation (for example veterinarians, animal health technicians etc.) or hobbies. Rabies post-exposure prophylaxis is provided when persons have been potentially exposed to the virus.

There is currently a shortage of Verorab™ rabies vaccine in South Africa. Chirorab® has been identified as a suitable alternative, which the National Department of Health has procured through Kahma Biotech (Pty Ltd) as of January 2025.

The dosing schedule for Chirorab® remains the same as outlined in the national and World Health Organisation guidelines for rabies pre- and post-exposure vaccination. Note that although the product volume per vial differs for Chirorab® and Verorab™, the total content of one vial constitutes a single intramuscular dose.

Public-sector facilities requiring Chirorab® are advised to contact their respective provincial pharmacy depot for procurement. Private-sector providers should follow the procurement guidelines as per their organisational guidelines.

For further information on rabies, as well as guidelines for management of potential exposure, click these links: [Rabies \(Disease Index\) - NICD](#) and [Human-Rabies-Prophylaxis-Guidelines DRAFT 29-October-2021.pdf](#)

For clinical rabies queries, clinicians can contact the NICD hotline: 0800 212 552