27 May 2015

**Imported canine rabies: France**

**A report of a confirmed case of rabies in a domestic dog, Le Chambon Feugerolles, Loire, Rhône-Alpes, France**

The World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) has reported a confirmed case of rabies in a domestic dog in France. The dog, which had been illegally imported to France from Hungary in December 2014, had travelled with its owners to Algeria in April, returning to France on 7 May 2015. On 16 May 2015 the dog was taken to a veterinarian after becoming aggressive and unwell; the dog was placed in quarantine and died on 18 May 2015. Rabies infection was confirmed by the Pasteur Institute on 21 May 2015 and typing of the virus strain (type Africa 1) has shown the infection was acquired in Algeria.

Between 7th and 16th May, 2015 the dog had contact with at least nine people and one dog in Le Chambon Feugerolles, Loire, Rhône-Alpes, France [1].

Although those close to this dog have been traced, French Public Health Authorities have issued emergency advice and contact numbers for others who may have been exposed to the infected animal [2]. In addition, restriction orders on the movement of domesticated carnivores have been imposed and the capture of stray animals in the area where the dog lived is underway [3, 4].

The risk of rabies transmission to humans in Le Chambon Feugerolles, Loire, Rhône-Alpes, France is low. In the rest of France, there is no risk of rabies [5].

France has been officially rabies free since 2010 but infection in dogs and cats illegally imported from countries with endemic rabies infection are sporadically reported in France, the last reported in 2013.

**Advice for travellers**

- The risk of rabies in the region of Le Chambon Feugerolles, Loire, Rhône-Alpes, France is low.
- There is no risk of rabies in the rest of France.

You are advised to avoid contact with wild (including bats) and domestic animals when travelling in the parts of Europe and beyond where rabies is known or presumed to occur.

For travel to France, rabies pre-exposure vaccination is not recommended, but following an animal bite, scratch, or lick, wounds should be thoroughly washed with soap and water. An urgent medical assessment should be sought either in France or on return to the UK (if your return is imminent), from your GP or [NHS Choices 111 Service](https://www.nhschoices.nhs.uk) to assess the risk of rabies, even if the wound appears trivial.

**Advice for health professionals**

Guidance on assessing risk following rabies exposure, post-exposure treatment, and public health management of a suspected rabies case in the UK is available from Public Health England (PHE). Expert advice for health professionals is available from the PHE Virus Reference Laboratory via the duty doctor system (020 8200 4400).
More information about rabies can be found on the TravelHealthPro factsheet on rabies.

Country specific information, including information on rabies, can be found on the Country Information pages.

Resources

- Rabies factsheet
- NHS Choices: Emergency and Urgent Care Services
- Public Health England: Rabies post-exposure guidance
- World Health Organization: Rabies risk distribution map

References


