

# Rabies risk in Timor-Leste Alert: Pre and Post Travel Assessment

Information for GPs and AMSs – please distribute to all medical and nursing staff

## Key Points

- Timor-Leste is now considered a high-risk country for rabies.
- Travellers to Timor-Leste should be assessed for vaccination (pre-exposure prophylaxis) and provided with rabies prevention advice.
- Travellers returning from Timor-Leste with any animal bites, scratches or animal saliva exposure should be assessed for post-exposure prophylaxis. Contact your Public Health Unit on **1300 066 055**.

## Background

- A recent identification of rabies in a dog in Oecusse, an exclave of Timor-Leste surrounded by West Timor, Indonesia, marks the first rabies detection in Timor-Leste.
- There have also been recent detections and human cases in West Timor, Indonesia.
- All of Timor-Leste should now be considered high-risk for rabies given the potential for transmission on the island.

## Recommendations

Travellers to Timor-Leste and other high-risk countries for rabies should:

- be assessed for likelihood of animal interactions and potential exposure following the guidance in the [Australian Immunisation Handbook](#). Administer vaccination (pre-exposure prophylaxis) when indicated.
- receive education about avoiding animal interactions as per: [NSW Health Rabies and Australian bat lyssavirus infection fact sheet](#) and [Rabies information for Travellers](#).

Travelers from Timor-Leste and other high-risk countries for rabies who have experienced animal bites, scratches, or animal saliva exposure should:

- be evaluated for post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP). Contact the Public Health Unit on **1300 066 055** for PEP assessment. Where indicated, the PHU will arrange for rabies vaccines and immunoglobulin (RIG) to be delivered to GPs or hospitals. The vaccines and RIG can be ordered by PHU staff and therefore, the patient will receive PEP for free.
- receive appropriate wound care. Immediate and thorough cleaning of a wound directly after exposure is the optimal measure to reduce rabies risk. All wounds, even those assessed after a delay, should be thoroughly evaluated and cleaned as appropriate.

## Further Information

- Information for travellers can be found on NSW Fact Sheets
  - [Rabies and Australian bat lyssavirus infection fact sheet](#)
  - [Rabies information for Travellers](#) (this includes translated resources)
- Further clinical guidance
  - [Australian Immunisation Handbook](#)
  - [NSW Health Rabies Control Guidelines](#)

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