



Universidad de Puerto Rico en Arecibo



Departamento de Biología | Programa de Tecnología Veterinaria

Carr. 653 Km. 0.8 Sector Las Dunas, Arecibo / P.O. Box 4010 Arecibo P.R. 00614

<http://upra.edu/biologia/asociado/>

(787) 815-0000 Exts. 3475, 3450, 3451, 3460, 3480

ESTUDIANTES DE NUEVO INGRESO PROGRAMA DE TVET

¡Bienvenidos/as a la Universidad de Puerto Rico en Arecibo y en especial al Programa de Tecnología Veterinaria! Para nosotros/as es un orgullo poder tenerles y ofrecerles la mejor educación en la mejor Universidad.

En estos momentos que se están preparando para cumplir con los documentos y requisitos de admisión es importante que tomen en cuenta que, para mantener su seguridad durante sus estudios, el Programa de TVET les requiere que se vacunen contra el virus de la rabia.

La rabia es una enfermedad grave y mortal causada por lisavirus de la familia de los rabdovirus. Puede ser transmitida por animales de sangre caliente, incluidos los humanos. En Puerto Rico, el reservorio y principal vector es la mangosta. Sin embargo, otros vectores potenciales son los gatos, los perros y los cerdos vietnamitas.

El virus entra en el cuerpo a través de una herida o de las membranas mucosas. La transmisión de la rabia se produce casi siempre a través de la introducción de la saliva cargada de virus en los tejidos, generalmente por la mordedura de un animal rabioso. Los Centros para el Control de Enfermedades (CDC) afirman que la rabia infecta el sistema nervioso central y que, después de que una persona se infecte con este virus, los síntomas pueden tardar en aparecer. Los síntomas pueden tardar semanas o incluso meses en aparecer tras la mordedura, causando debilidad o malestar general, fiebre o dolor de cabeza. A medida que la enfermedad avanza, la persona puede experimentar delirio, comportamiento anormal, alucinaciones, hidrofobia (miedo al agua) e insomnio.

El Programa de Tecnología Veterinaria de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, Arecibo (TVET-UPRA) tiene como objetivo disminuir la posibilidad de exposición de los estudiantes, la facultad y otro personal del programa a la rabia. Por lo tanto, todos nuestros estudiantes, profesores y personal deben cumplir con esta política de mitigación de la rabia.

I. Declaración de Política

Es política del Programa de Tecnología Veterinaria de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, Arecibo, exigir la vacunación antirrábica humana previa a la exposición a todos los estudiantes, profesores y personal del programa.



II. Disponibilidad de la vacunación antirrábica humana previa a la exposición

Es responsabilidad de los estudiantes, la facultad y el personal del programa hacer los arreglos para inmunizarse si desean ser vacunados contra la rabia. La vacunación será administrada a su propio costo por un médico o clínica aprobada por el Departamento de Salud de Puerto Rico (DS). El DS remitió la siguiente lista de clínicas que cuentan con la vacunación antirrábica humana previa a la exposición:

1. **Centro de Bienestar de Vacunas y Vitaminas -Vacunas Bright Center - Mayagüez -787-944-9116**
2. **Centro de Bienestar de Vacunas y Vitaminas - Ponce - 787 944-9116**
3. **Centro de Bienestar de Vacunas y Vitaminas - San Juan - 787-944-5632**
4. **Puerto Rico Caribbean Travel Medicine Clinic -Dra. DeSeda -787-756-6651**

La oficina de Servicios Médicos de UPRA no ofrece la vacuna antirrábica previa o posterior a la exposición.

La serie de vacunas de pre-exposición consiste en dos inyecciones administradas en los días 0 y 7. El total de las dos dosis costará aproximadamente \$900.00, dependiendo del precio actual de la vacuna y del proveedor de servicios de salud. Los militares activos o retirados también pueden ser elegibles para la inmunización contra la rabia a través del Departamento de Asuntos de Veteranos de los Estados Unidos (VA). Consulte con su proveedor de salud de la VA. Al presente, ningún plan médico cubre el costo de la misma.

Según el Departamento de Salud de Puerto Rico, después de la vacunación antirrábica humana previa a la exposición, cada dos años deben medirse los títulos de anticuerpos para evaluar el estado de inmunización de la persona.



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En caso de que los estudiantes, la facultad o el personal del programa rechacen (por razones de salud) la vacunación contra la rabia, se les pide que lean y firmen la exención de vacunación contra la rabia contenida en el documento NOTIFICACIÓN DE REQUERIMIENTO DE VACUNA CONTRA LA RABIA.

Adjunto la política del Programa de Tecnología Veterinaria para la mitigación de la rabia y la NOTIFICACIÓN DE REQUERIMIENTO DE VACUNA CONTRA LA RABIA. **En este último documento debe escoger la opción que le corresponda a usted, firmarlo y entregarlo en formato de pdf junto con el certificado de vacunación. Los documentos en pdf deben ser grabados con su nombre y el nombre del documento tal como se describe a continuación:**

Apellido_nombre_relevorabia
Apellido_nombre_certificadorabia

Más adelante se le indicará a qué dirección electrónica debe enviar La NOTIFICACIÓN DE REQUERIMIENTO DE VACUNA CONTRA LA RABIA y cuál será la fecha límite.

Por último, se enlaza la página de los CDC sobre la vacunación de pre-exposición a la rabia.

https://www.cdc.gov/rabies/prevention/pre-exposure_vaccinations.html



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NOTIFICACIÓN DE REQUERIMIENTO DE VACUNA CONTRA LA RABIA

Yo, _____, estando matriculado en el programa de Tecnología Veterinaria de la UPRA, entiendo y acepto que, durante el curso de mis estudios, existe para mí el potencial de exposición al virus de la rabia. El Centro para el Control y Prevención de Enfermedades (CDC) ha determinado que las personas con alto riesgo de exposición al virus de rabia, como técnicos veterinarios, deben recibir una vacuna preventiva.

Entiendo que durante mi participación en laboratorios y/o clínicas, habrá una exposición directa a los animales y consecuentemente existe el riesgo de contaminación con el virus de la rabia, y que, por tanto, es mi responsabilidad estar vacunado contra la rabia. De no cumplir con esta recomendación, libero de toda responsabilidad a la Universidad de Puerto Rico en Arecibo y a todos sus funcionarios. Afirmo que en el caso en que se identifique que haya sufrido exposición al virus de rabia, será mi responsabilidad pagar todos los costos asociados con el tratamiento post exposición a la rabia.

Se me ha presentado el protocolo para el manejo de mordidas y estoy consciente de mis responsabilidades y deberes para la prevención de estas. Mi firma abajo indica que entiendo y acepto los riesgos potenciales del currículo Tecnología Veterinaria para mi persona.

☐ Acepto vacunarme contra el virus de la rabia. Coordinaré con mi médico de cabecera la obtención de la vacuna de pre-exposición contra la rabia o la orden médica para la vacuna de pre-exposición contra la rabia. Copia del certificado de vacunación (en formato pdf) junto con el presente documento será enviado a la coordinadora del Programa de Tecnología Veterinaria, Lic. Rochellie Cortés Martínez, siguiente dirección: rochellie.cortes@upr.edu

☐ Renuncio a mi derecho a solicitar la serie de vacunación antirrábica previa a la exposición. Se presenta prueba de contraindicación médica o exención religiosa de recibir la vacuna contra la rabia. Comprendo el mayor riesgo de contraer la rabia al no vacunarme.

FIRMA DE ESTUDIANTE

FECHA

NÚMERO DE ESTUDIANTE



RABIES POLICY AND COMPREHENSIVE MITIGATION PLAN

Rabies is a severe, deadly disease caused by lyssaviruses of the Rhabdovirus family. It can be transmitted by warm-blooded animals, including humans. In Puerto Rico the reservoir and main vector is the mongoose. However, other potential vectors are cats, dogs, and Vietnamese pot-bellied pigs.

The virus enters the body through a wound or via mucous membranes. Transmission of rabies almost always occurs via introduction of virus-laden saliva into tissues, usually by the bite of a rabid animal. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) says that rabies infects the central nervous system and after a person is infected with this virus, symptoms can take a while to appear. Symptoms can take weeks or even months to appear after a bite, causing general weakness or discomfort, fever, or headache. As the disease progresses, the person may experience delirium, abnormal behavior, hallucinations, hydrophobia (fear of water), and insomnia.

The Veterinary Technology Program at the University of Puerto Rico, Arecibo (TVET-UPRA) aims to decrease the chance of exposure of students, faculty, and other program personnel to rabies. Therefore, all our students, faculty and personnel must comply with this rabies mitigation policy.

I. Policy Statement

It is the policy of the Veterinary Technology Program at the University of Puerto Rico, Arecibo to require pre-exposure human rabies vaccination for all students, faculty, and program personnel.

II. Pre-exposure human rabies vaccination availability

It is the responsibility of the students, faculty, and program personnel to make the arrangements to get immunized should they wish to be vaccinated against rabies. The vaccination will be administered at their own expense by a physician or clinic approved by the Puerto Rico Department of Health (DH). The DH referred the following list of clinics that have the pre-exposure human rabies vaccination:

1. Vaccine and Vitamins Wellness Center –Vacunas Bright Center – Mayagüez -787-944-9116
2. Vaccine and Vitamins Wellness Center – Ponce - 787 944-9116
3. Vaccine and Vitamins Wellness Center – San Juan - 787-944-5632
4. Puerto Rico Caribbean Travel Medicine Clinic -Dra. DeSeda -787-756-6651



The UPRA health clinic does not offer the pre-exposure or post-exposure rabies vaccine.

At present, no medical plan covers the cost of it.

The pre-exposure vaccine series consist of two injections given at days 0 and 7. The total for the two doses will cost approximately \$900.00, depending on the current price for the vaccine and the health care provider. Active or retired military may also be eligible for immunization against rabies through the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs (VA). Check with your VA health provider.

As per the Puerto Rico Department of Health, after pre-exposure human rabies vaccination, every two years antibody titers should be measured to evaluate the immunization status of the person.

Should students, faculty, or program personnel decline rabies vaccination, they are asked to read and sign the Rabies Vaccination Waiver (Appendix 1).

5. Compliance

Compliance will be ensured from the Director of the Veterinary Technology Program, and the program's Licensed Veterinary Technician (LVT). Proof of pre-exposure vaccination will be sent to the program director and the LVT prior handling or coming in contact with any animals at the University or at the primary learning sites outside the university.

6. Applicable statutes, regulations, and related policies

Vaccine information statements can be found on the CDC website: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/vis/vis-statements/rabies.html#problem>

The Puerto Rico Department of Health, State Office for Animal Control, reports rabies cases, gives recommendations upon exposure, and explains what this virus is and its consequences on the following website: <https://www.salud.gov.pr/CMS/431>

7. Standards

The AVMA-CVTEA accreditation policies and procedures, Standard 4e discusses the students, faculty and program personnel safety.

“Safety of students, program personnel, and animals must be of prime consideration. Students must be educated on rabies risk prior to working with animals. Prior to live animal use, students must be vaccinated against rabies, or the program must implement a comprehensive rabies mitigation protocol as described in Appendix A. (Refer to Statement on Safety, Appendix A). The Committee added Appendix A – Rabies Supplement –



Comprehensive Rabies Mitigation Plan. Appendix A – Rabies Supplement – Comprehensive Rabies Mitigation Plan Rabies in humans can be prevented either by eliminating exposures to rabid animals or by providing exposed persons with prompt local treatment of wounds combined with appropriate postexposure prophylaxis (including both passive antibody administration and active immunization with cell culture vaccines). In addition, pre-exposure vaccination should be offered to persons in high-risk groups, such as veterinarians, animal handlers, and certain laboratory workers. Student safety must be considered above financial challenges.”

8. Procedure - Comprehensive Rabies Mitigation Plan of the TVET-UPRA

1. Vaccination of animals (cats, dogs, horses, food, and fiber species)

All dogs or cats used for teaching purpose at TVET-UPRA must be vaccinated against rabies virus. Any client, student, faculty, or program personnel owned dog or cat used in laboratory classes will be required to either bring in proof of a current vaccine or bring in their pet to be vaccinated against rabies more than 28 days before their schedule procedure. Only vaccinated students, faculty and program personnel will handle unvaccinated animals. The Program Director and the LVT will be in charge to make a medical record, with proof of vaccination attached to it, of each dog or cat using the AviMark program at TVET-UPRA.

All equine and ruminants used to teach essential skills to unvaccinated students must be vaccinated against rabies. Proof of vaccination will be provided to the Program Director or the Program's LVT. TVET-UPRA will provide rabies vaccination to those horses, cows and small ruminants that are not vaccinated but are planned to be used to teach essential skills. The Program Director and the LVT will be in charge to make a medical record, with proof of vaccination attached to it, of each dog or cat using the AviMark program at TVET-UPRA.

2. Hold seroconversion period post rabies vaccination (per CDC 28 days)

Only fully vaccinated students or students with proof of a protective titer, faculty and program personnel will care for animals that are not vaccinated until they are fully immunized against rabies. These animals will be under the care of their owners which will indicate the health status to the LVT prior to arrival to UPRA-TVET.

3. Hold period for animals not vaccinated (per CDC 45 days)

When handling an unvaccinated animal, if the animal is exposed to a possible vector, the animal will be quarantine. The observation period will take place at the San Francisco de



Asís Veterinary Hospital in Hatillo, PR. The pets will be placed in cages designated by the institution. The pet will only be handled by veterinary personnel and veterinary technicians who are vaccinated against rabies. The observation period of this pet will be 45 days, and if during that time the pet presents any symptomatology related to rabies it will be euthanized and its head will be sent for diagnostic testing and the Puerto Rico Department of Health will be contacted.

4. Communication to external parties – animal sources, off campus sites, externship sites
Primary learning facilities and externship sites will be made aware the rabies vaccination status of the students using the facilities. It is up to the primary learning facility or the externship site to accept or deny entry of students that are not vaccinated. (Appendix 2 - Addendum to the MOU – Acceptance of immunized or non-immunized students to learning facilities or externship sites)
5. Communication to internal parties
The Director of the Department of Biology, the Dean of Academic Affairs, and Chancellor, have been made aware and subscribe the present policy (Appendix 3 - Letter of acceptance of the TVET-UPRA Rabies Mitigation Policy).
6. Communication to students
 - a. First year students- during orientation week, students will have a seminar explaining the pathogenicity, transmission, clinical signs, pre-exposure immunization and post-exposure protocol for rabies. They will be informed on how to access the pre-exposure vaccination or the vaccination waiver. Proof of these documents will be given to the Program Director and the LVT.
 - b. Second year students – during the first semester of the second year at the TVET-Program, student must take the following certification from the *Global Alliance for Rabies Control* by accessing the courses at <https://rabiesalliance.org/capacity-building/gep>. These includes:
 - Rabies Educator Certificate
 - Animal Handling and Vaccination
 - Certificate Community Coordinator for Rabies
 - Rabies Healthcare Certificate
 - c. All students will have appropriate PPE available. When working with any unvaccinated animal, students will be encouraged to use gloves, masks, and eye protection. In addition, students will be required to wear full scrubs uniform, and closed-toed shoes.



- d. The TVET-UPRA laboratory will have rabies information available in its bulletin board.
- 7. Comprehensive risk assessment considering local rabies prevalence
 - a. Before each semester begins, an audit of the confirmed rabies cases for the area will be completed. This information is available through the CDC and the Puerto Rico Department of Health at the following websites:
https://www.cdc.gov/rabies/location/usa/surveillance/human_rabies.html
<https://www.salud.gov.pr/CMS/431>

9. Contact information

- a. Primary POC: Lic. Rochellie Cortés Martínez, TVET Program Director, (787)815-0000, ext. 3480, email: rochellie.cortes@upr.edu
- b. All correspondence to be sent and notices to be given pursuant to policy will be addressed to University of Puerto Rico-Arecibo, Lic. Rochellie Cortés Martínez (Biología), Sector Las Dunas, Carr 653 Km 0.8 Arecibo, PR 00612



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APPENDIX 1 – PRE-EXPOSURE VACCINATION WAIVER

I _____, being enrolled in the Veterinary Technology program at UPRA, understand and agree that, during the course of my studies, there exists the potential for exposure to the rabies virus. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has determined that persons at high risk of exposure to the rabies virus, such as veterinary technicians and veterinarians, should receive a pre-exposure rabies vaccine.

I understand that during my involvement in laboratories and/or clinics, there will be direct exposure to animals and consequently there is a risk of contamination with rabies virus, and therefore, it is my responsibility to be vaccinated against rabies. If I do not comply with this recommendation, I release the University of Puerto Rico at Arecibo and all its officials from all liability. I affirm that in the event that I am identified as having suffered exposure to the rabies virus, it will be my responsibility to pay all costs associated with post-exposure rabies treatment.

If you have received or are currently receiving pre-exposure rabies vaccination, please provide a copy of the health certificate detailing the date.

In addition, I have been informed of the protocol for bite management and am aware of my responsibilities and duties for bite prevention. My signature below indicates that I understand and accept the potential risks of the Veterinary Technology curriculum to me.

STUDENT'S SIGNATURE

DATE

☐ I am currently receiving the primary human rabies vaccine series. Proof of vaccination must be provided to the Program Director and the LVT.

☐ I waive my right to seek pre-exposure rabies vaccination series. Proof of medical contraindication or religious exemption from receiving the rabies vaccine is presented. I understand the increased risk of contracting rabies by not getting vaccinated.



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APPENDIX 2 - Addendum to the MOU – Acceptance of immunized or non-immunized students to learning facilities or externship sites

I _____, representative of _____, a primary teaching facility or an externship clinical site for the Veterinary Technology Program at the University of Puerto Rico accept the following group of students at my facility:

Choose all that apply

- ☐ Students that have completed their initial pre-exposure rabies vaccination series within the past 2 years or have an adequate rabies titer drawn within the past 2 years.
- ☐ Students that have waive getting pre-exposure rabies vaccination series.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF both parties hereto freely and voluntarily sign and execute this ADDENDUM TO THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING.

Farm Name: _____ today _____ from _____, 20 _____

Representative : _____ Signature: _____

Program Director: _____ Signature: _____



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APPENDIX 3 - Letter of acceptance of the TVET-UPRA Rabies Mitigation Policy



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March 21, 2022

Dr. Luis T. Ramos
Program Director
Veterinary Technology Program

Acceptance of the TVET-UPRA Rabies Policy

I, Dr. Carlos Andújar, Chancellor of the University of Puerto Rico, Arecibo certify that I have received and read the Rabies Mitigation Policy of the TVET Program. After careful consideration, I approved the implementation of this policy for all students, faculty, and program personnel.

Dr. Carlos Andújar
Chancellor
University of Puerto Rico, Arecibo