

## WHAT TO DO WHEN THE DOG BITES.....

### What to do if bitten by a dog while riding your bike:

***Get all the information you can from the dog owner.***

- Owners name \_\_\_\_\_
- Address \_\_\_\_\_
- Phone \_\_\_\_\_
  
- Dog license number \_\_\_\_\_
- Proof of rabies shots (date) \_\_\_\_\_  
(Owner is required by law to have available on site.)
- Clean the wound as best as possible.
- Get medical attention (and/or file a police report)
- Notify local animal control office.  
(This can take days (especially in small hilltowns) as the person is often a part-time employee of town.)

**NOTE:** If one seeks medical care or files a police report these organizations are required by law to notify the state CDC in Boston. This sets in motion an investigation that the town has to respond to. Also, filing a police report on the spot would require the dog to be immediately quarantined for 10 days.

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#### **General Information:**

Rabies is a serious viral disease that affects your central nervous system. Typically rabies spreads by way of the saliva of infected animals — often, but not always, through a bite.

Some animals are more likely to carry rabies than others. Bats, skunks, raccoons, foxes, and coyotes are common carriers of the rabies virus. Dogs may also carry the rabies virus; however in the United States incidents of dog transmitted rabies is low due to widespread animal vaccination.

#### **Increased Exposure:**

By nature of the sport, bicycling increases your exposure to dogs that are either protecting their property, playful, or just do not like bicycles. The fact remains dogs are responsible for 85 to 90 percent of all animal bites.

#### **Rabies is serious:**

Once you're infected, the virus spreads from your muscle to your peripheral nerves to your spinal cord and brain. From initial flu-like signs and symptoms, the illness progresses to convulsions, hallucinations, paralysis or breathing failure and almost always death once the infection is established. It's important to seek treatment immediately after exposure.

Each year a few people die of rabies in the United States. Most deaths occur because the person didn't seek medical assistance. Treatment consists of treatment to the wound plus a series of rabies shots, which prevent symptoms and death resulting from rabies infection. If you think you've been exposed to an animal with rabies, call your doctor as soon as possible. If immunization is given within 2 days of the bite, rabies is usually prevented. To date, no one in the U.S. has yet developed rabies when given the vaccine promptly and appropriately. Once the symptoms appear, few people survive the disease.