



NORTHERN  
TERRITORY  
GOVERNMENT

# Centre for Disease Control

NT HEALTH

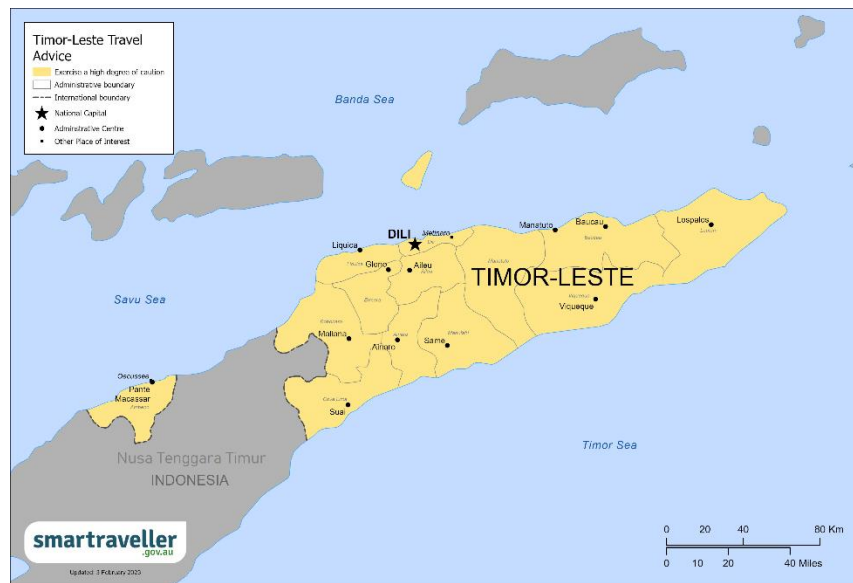
 **Public Health Alert**

Issued: 11 April 2024

Issued by: Director, Centre for Disease Control (CDC)

Issued to: Clinicians

## Rabies detected in Timor-Leste (East Timor)



### Summary

- Timor-Leste is now considered a high-risk country for rabies.
- Travellers to Timor-Leste should be assessed for vaccination pre-exposure prophylaxis (PreP), provided with rabies prevention advice and if bitten by an animal in Timor-Leste considered for post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) with rabies vaccine and human rabies immunoglobulin (HRIG).
- Timor-Leste had previously been considered rabies-free, however an outbreak of rabies in the Indonesian neighbouring land-bordering province of Nusa Tenggara Timur has now spread to the exclave of Oecusse marking the first rabies detection in Timor-Leste.
- People with dog, monkey or bat scratches or any animal bites that occurred in Timor-Leste (which includes Oecusse) should be considered for post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) of rabies vaccine and human rabies immunoglobulin (HRIG) to prevent potential rabies infection. Rabies is a fatal disease.
- Post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) with both vaccine and immunoglobulin may not be readily available in Timor-Leste: Travellers should return to Australia as soon as possible if they have been bitten or scratched by an animal that potentially could transmit rabies.

Centre for Disease Control  
Public Health Division

 (08) 8922 8044 or 1800 008 002  
 [CDCSurveillance.DARWIN@nt.gov.au](mailto:CDCSurveillance.DARWIN@nt.gov.au)

## Actions

- The NT CDC recommends pre-exposure prevention strategies including rabies vaccinations for people travelling to rabies-endemic and risk countries, including Timor-Leste, in line with the advice in the [Australian Immunisation Handbook](#).
- Avoid contact with wild and domestic animals overseas, particularly dogs, bats and monkeys and supervision of children who may come into contact with wild or domestic animals overseas.
- Recommend and/or arrange post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) after any bite or scratch from a wild or domestic animal in a rabies endemic or risk country, which now includes Timor-Leste.
- Thoroughly wash any wound immediately with soap and water for at least 15 minutes.
- Apply an antiseptic solution such as povidone-iodine or alcohol.
- Seek immediate medical attention.
- In the NT, PEP rabies vaccine and immunoglobulin is free. Contact the NT CDC in your region during work hours or contact the on-call Public Health Physician after hours through the Royal Darwin Hospital switch on (08) 8922 8888 to seek medical attention at nearest hospital ED.

## Further information

- Rabies is a lyssaviral disease of animals (mostly dogs, bats, monkeys, cats and other mammals) that can infect people usually through a bite or scratch from an infected animal and occurs in many parts of the world, but not in Australia (however Australia Bat Lyssavirus is a very similar virus).
- If left untreated, people infected with rabies almost certainly die (100% case fatality).
- [Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade - Smart Traveller - Timor-Leste](#)
- [Australian Immunisation Handbook](#)
- [Rabies and other lyssavirus - CDNA National Guidelines for Public Health Units](#)

## Contact

CDC Darwin	Ph 8922 8044	Fax 8922 8310	<a href="mailto:cdc-surveillance.darwin@nt.gov.au">cdc-surveillance.darwin@nt.gov.au</a>
CDC Alice Springs	Ph 8951 7540	Fax 8951 7900	<a href="mailto:cdc.alicesprings@nt.gov.au">cdc.alicesprings@nt.gov.au</a>
CDC Katherine	Ph 8973 9049	Fax 8973 9048	<a href="mailto:cdc.katherine@nt.gov.au">cdc.katherine@nt.gov.au</a>
CDC Tennant Creek	Ph 8962 4259	Fax 8962 4420	<a href="mailto:cdc.barkly@nt.gov.au">cdc.barkly@nt.gov.au</a>
CDC Nhulunbuy	Ph 8987 0357	Fax 8987 0500	<a href="mailto:cdcgove.doh@nt.gov.au">cdcgove.doh@nt.gov.au</a>

## Scan below for more on Public Health Alerts



Issued by: Dr Vicki Krause, Director, CDC, Public Health Division, NT Health

**Centre for Disease Control**  
Public Health Division

☎ (08) 8922 8044 or 1800 008 002  
✉ [CDCSurveillance.DARWIN@nt.gov.au](mailto:CDCSurveillance.DARWIN@nt.gov.au)