Once clinical signs appear, death of the animal will soon follow.

**Remember:** The entire course of clinical rabies in domestic animals usually lasts less than a week.

**Rabies Treatment**

**Emergency first aid** to prevent rabies in humans includes the following steps:

- Let the wound bleed.
- **Wash the wound with soap and water.**
- Seek medical attention.

Let the wound bleed to help remove the rabies virus from the wound. Wash the wound with soap and water; this will also help remove the rabies virus from the wound. Apply an antiseptic, if available. Seek medical attention as soon as possible. **Any bite, even a small one, can be deadly.**

**Rabies Vaccinations**

Vaccinations that a person receives after being exposed to rabies are called **postexposure prophylaxis** (prevention). The decision of whether to administer postexposure prophylaxis should be between a person and his or her physician. If the exposure victim has **not** been previously vaccinated against rabies, he or she will need to be treated with two types of products given by injection:

- One product provides **immediate, but temporary, protection against rabies.** It is a type of antiserum called **human rabies immune globulin (HRIG)** and is made of human **antibodies.** This product is given according to weight, meaning that a heavy person needs more antiserum than a light person. As much as possible is **injected** around the bite wound(s); any remaining antiserum should be given in the closest muscle mass that's
large enough to receive the remaining immune globulin (and not where the vaccine is given). These antibodies immediately attack the rabies virus in the body, but they only last a few weeks.

- The other product is a **vaccine**, such as **human diploid cell vaccine (HDCV)** or **purified chick embryo cell (PCEC)**. **Four doses** of the vaccine are administered in the arm muscle **over a period of two weeks (a fifth dose may be administered to people with poor immune systems)**. The rabies vaccine will cause the body to produce its own antibodies against the rabies virus and provide long-term protection.

**Rabies Vaccinations for Animal Control Officers**

According to Section 169.24 of the Texas Administrative Code, Rabies Control and Eradication (rules of the Rabies Control Act), **all animal control officers (ACOs) should take a series of rabies vaccinations to protect themselves from rabies.** This is called preexposure prophylaxis.

- The preexposure vaccinations consist of **three injections with rabies vaccine (such as HDCV or PCEC) given over a 3- to 4-week period.** After you receive this series of vaccinations, you should have your titer checked every two years and get a booster vaccination if needed.

- If you have had preexposure vaccinations and are exposed to rabies, you will only need **two more injections of rabies vaccine and will not need the rabies antiserum (HRIG).** Also, if you are exposed to rabies without being aware of it and do not receive postexposure treatment, you stand a better chance of not developing rabies than if you were not vaccinated previously.