



**11 December 2008**

## **RABIES CONFIRMED IN BALI**

Doctors are advised that Indonesian authorities declared on 1 December 2008 that Bali IS NO LONGER RABIES FREE. This is contrary to advice in the current 9<sup>th</sup> Edition of the Australian Immunisation Handbook,.

Significant evidence now indicates the presence of rabies in dogs from the southern tourist areas of Bali (Kuta and environs) which are frequented by Australian travellers. It also appears that there may have been fatal human cases of rabies in Bali in the past two months.

Henceforward, **please recommend rabies post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) for all persons with risky animal bites sustained anywhere in Bali** (as for other parts of Indonesia, South-East Asia and other parts of the world where rabies is endemic). Any mammal in Bali, including dogs, cats and bats, should be considered potentially rabid, and risky exposures include bites, scratches and mucous membrane exposure to animal saliva.

For people who have had risky animal exposures in Bali prior to this new advice — and who have previously been advised that PEP was not necessary — we would request that doctors identify such persons and discuss the need for delayed PEP with staff at their local Public Health Unit or the Central Immunisation Clinic. PEP will be recommended for exposures dating back to 1<sup>st</sup> August 2008, and perhaps earlier, depending on circumstances of the incident and any new information that may emerge on when rabies first arrived in Bali.

For advice and for arranging rabies PEP, during office hours please call your local Public Health Unit (rural areas) or the Central Immunisation Clinic (metropolitan area) on ph. 9321 1312. After hours, the on-call public health physician from CDCD can be contacted via the Department of Health duty officer on ph. 9328 0553. Public health staff, via any of these contact mechanisms, can authorise release and delivery of rabies vaccine and HRIG to a GP surgery or hospital emergency department, as appropriate.

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