

Policy Number: CP-IFP22-029A

Effective Date: January 1, 2024

Rabies Vaccine

The purpose of this policy is to provide clarity and specificity for coverage of Rabies vaccines. Rabies vaccine can be used pre-exposure for people who are at high risk of exposure, or for international travelers that might encounter animals where rabies is common and access to appropriate care is unavailable.

It can also be used post exposure as a treatment for a person who has been bitten by an animal suspected to be infected with rabies. This policy will address when a rabies vaccine is covered under a member’s health plan.

DISCLAIMER

Coverage Policies are developed to assist in identifying coverage for UCare benefits under UCare’s health plans. They are intended to serve only as a general reference regarding UCare’s administration of health benefits and are not intended to address all issues related to coverage for health services provided to UCare members.

These services may or may not be covered by all UCare products (refer to product section of individual coverage policy for product-specific detail). Providers are encouraged to have their UCare patient refer to their UCare plan documents (Evidence of Coverage/Member Handbook/Member Contract) for specific coverage information. If there is a conflict between a coverage policy and the UCare plan documents, the UCare plan documents prevail.

Coverage Policies do not constitute medical advice. Providers are responsible for submission of accurate and compliant claims.

PRODUCT SUMMARY

This coverage policy applies to the following UCare products:

UCare product	Applies to
UCare Individual & Family Plans (IFP), UCare IFP with M Health Fairview	✓
UCare Medicare Plans, UCare Medicare with M Health Fairview & North Memorial Health, UCare Advocate Plus (HMO I-SNP), EssentiaCare	
UCare’s Minnesota Senior Health Options (MSHO) (HMO D-SNP)	
UCare Connect + Medicare (HMO D-SNP)	
UCare Connect (SNBC)	
Prepaid Medical Assistance Program (PMAP), MinnesotaCare	
Minnesota Senior Care Plus (MSC+)	

Benefit category:

Injections or Immunization ; Exclusions-Services Not Covered

Definitions or summary

Rabies is mainly a disease of animals. Humans get rabies when they are bitten or scratched by infected animals.

- Human rabies is rare in the United States.
- Rabies infects the central nervous system. After infection with rabies, at first there might not be any symptoms. Weeks or even months after a bite, rabies can cause 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.
- Rabies is more common in other parts of the world where dogs still carry rabies. Most rabies deaths in people around the world are caused by bites from unvaccinated dogs.
- Wild animals like bats, raccoons, skunks, and foxes are the most common source of human rabies infection in the United States.

Pre-exposure (prophylactic)

- Generally administered to people at high risk of exposure to rabies due to their employment, volunteer, or student status or for international travelers that travel to parts of the world where rabies is common and medical treatment is limited.
- For pre-exposure protection, 3 doses of rabies vaccine are recommended.
 - People who may be repeatedly exposed to rabies virus should receive periodic testing for immunity, and booster doses might be necessary

Post exposure (treatment)

- Anyone who has been bitten by an animal suspected to have rabies, or who otherwise may have been exposed to rabies, should clean the wound and see a health care provider immediately regardless of vaccination status.
- The health care provider can help determine if the person should receive post-exposure rabies vaccination.

Coverage policy

COVERED

Pre-exposure (prophylactic) rabies vaccination is covered for:

- International travelers who are likely to encounter animals in parts of the world where rabies is common and immediate access to appropriate care is limited.
- People whose activities bring them into frequent contact with rabies virus or with possibly rabid animals.

Post exposure treatment is covered when:

- A person who has been previously vaccinated and has a known exposure
 - Generally, receive 2 doses of rabies vaccine and do not receive Rabies Immune Globulin.
- A person who is exposed and has never been vaccinated against rabies
 - Generally, receive 4 doses of rabies vaccine AND rabies immune globulin (RIG).

NOT COVERED

- Rabies vaccine given to people at high risk of rabies to protect them if they are exposed *due to their employment, volunteer, or student status*.
 - Examples include:
 - Veterinarians, animal handlers, and veterinary students
 - Rabies laboratory workers

- Volunteers with animal rescue
 - Persons who work with live vaccine to produce rabies vaccine and rabies immune globulin.
- Coverage for the vaccine would be the responsibility of the employer, organization, or educational institution.
- Under the **Exclusions-Services Not Covered** section of the IFP member contract:
 - *Treatment, procedures, services, and drugs that are not medically necessary and/or that are primarily educational or for the vocation, comfort, convenience, appearance, or recreation of the member (are not covered). This includes cognitive retraining and skills training. AND*
 - *Health services and certifications when required by third parties, including for purposes of insurance, legal proceedings, licensure, and employment, and when such services are not preventive care or medically necessary (are not covered).*

Prior Authorization

Not required

Related Policies and Documentation

References to other policies or documentation that may be relevant to this policy

Policy Number	Policy Description
None	

References and Source Documents

Links to the UCare contracts, Center for Medicare, and Medicaid Services (CMS), MHCP, Minnesota statute and other relevant documents used to create this policy

[Member Documents and Information:](#)

[Individual & Family Plans Formulary:](#)

[CDC Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Rabies:](#)

[CDC Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:](#)

Coverage Policy Development and Revision History

Version	Date	Note(s)
V1	July 1, 2022	New Policy
	Nov.30, 2022	Annual review; no changes
	Oct. 29,2023	Annual review, no changes