Appendix 1: BECKER COLLEGE
Veterinary Technology and Animal Care Student

Rabies Vaccination Waiver

Questions about rabies:

1. As a veterinary technology student at Becker College, should I be vaccinated for rabies?

   Answer: It is highly recommended that all veterinary technology students be vaccinated for rabies. Since 1992, the raccoon strain of rabies has become endemic in Massachusetts. All dogs and cats in Massachusetts are required by law to be vaccinated for rabies but, in reality, this does not occur. We can never be absolutely assured that any vaccinated or unvaccinated dog or cat is not carrying rabies. The Center for Disease Control considers individuals who work with animals from a rabies endemic region in the “frequent” exposure risk category. The CDC recommends these individuals obtain the primary course of rabies vaccination with serologic monitoring and/or booster vaccination every two years.

2. If I am exposed to rabies, what is the treatment?

   Answer: For vaccinated individuals, the wound is immediately and thoroughly cleansed with soap and water. Then two doses of rabies vaccine are given, one is given immediately, the other is given three days later.

   For non-vaccinated individuals, the wound is immediately and thoroughly cleaned with soap and water. The area around the wound is injected with Human Rabies Immune Globulin (HRIG), and then five doses of rabies vaccine are given after the exposure on days 0, 3, 7, 14, and 28.

   As one can see, pre-exposure vaccination reduces the number of injections the patient would receive and does help to protect against possible unknown exposure to the rabies virus. The injection of HRIG around the bite wound is painful and could be avoided by having pre-exposure vaccination prophylaxis.

3. Which regimen is more effective in preventing rabies, pre-exposure vaccination or the full series of post-exposure injections?

   Answer: Both approaches are effective in preventing rabies infection. Both require injections after exposure. The main benefit of pre-exposure vaccination is that some immunity has been already mounted if you are unknowingly exposed to a rabid animal.

   The following information (on next page) is taken from the Rabies Prevention—United States, 1991 published by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Center for Disease Control. This article further explains the risks and benefits of rabies vaccination prophylaxis.

I have read the material provided and understand that due to my occupational exposure to animals, I may be at risk of exposure to rabies infection. After reading this material and in consultation with my physician, I decline the pre-exposure rabies prophylactic vaccination.

________________________________________________________________________
Student Signature      Date

Parent or Guardian Signature (if student is under 18 years of age)

I have chosen to have the pre-exposure rabies vaccination* and understand that it is recommended to have a rabies vaccine titer checked every 2 years.

________________________________________________________________________
Student Signature      Date

I have had the pre-exposure rabies vaccination* but I decline the recommended titer check.

________________________________________________________________________
Student Signature      Date

*Official medical documentation of the completed series must be on file in the Student Health Services Office.