



ALLEGHENY COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH LABORATORY  
3901 Penn Ave, Building 8  
Pittsburgh, PA 15224  
412.578.8070

# Animal Specimens for Rabies Testing

## Test Description

Rabies testing is a qualitative assay which samples submitted animal brain tissue. Direct fluorescent antibody staining is utilized to identify the presence of the rabies virus.

Specimens should be taken to the Public Health Laboratory in Lawrenceville, located at 3901 Penn Avenue, 15224 to Building 8 or Building 1 (schedule below):

### *Standard Hours*

Monday - Friday 8:30 AM to 3:30 PM

- Building 8: Ring Doorbell and announce you have a rabies specimen to be processed

### *Non Standard Hours*

Monday - Friday 3:31 PM to 8:29 AM

Saturday and Sunday any time **except** 6:00 AM to 2:00 PM.

Holidays (24 hours)

- Building 1 [Knock to Notify Guard on Duty]

## Acceptable Specimens: collection guide and transport conditions

- Brain tissue
  - Temperature: Refrigerated (2-8 °C) Frozen (-5 and beyond)
  - Container: Small specimens can be submitted in their entirety. Larger animals must be decapitated and only the head submitted



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- Anything greater than 30 lbs., it is considered a large specimen and will need to be decapitated for submission and testing
- Notes: Specimens cannot be submitted if there is significant damage to the brain as this will preclude testing. Specimens, with exception of bats, should be euthanized before delivery

### **Laboratory Unit**

Virology

### **Methodology**

Rabies virus antigen

Direct fluorescent antibodies test

### **Test Request**

(Will link to requisition when completed)

### **Possible Results:**

- Absent
- Present

### **Reference Range**

Absent

### **Rejection Criteria**

- Unreadable/missing labeling
- Storage/transportation requirements not met
- Leaking or contaminated specimen transport container
- Insufficient sample received
- Animals must not be decomposed to the point that brain tissue cannot be retrieved. Such animals will be rejected

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- Animals must not be dehydrated to the point that brain tissue cannot be retrieved
- Animals brain must not be damaged to the point that brain tissue cannot be retrieved
- All animals other than bats must not be received alive. If the animal is alive at the time of submission, the laboratory will insist that it be taken to a veterinarian's office (or other acceptable agency) to be euthanized
- Submitted animals must possess an intact head
- Specimens cannot be fixed in formalin

**Result Reported**

1-4 days

**LOINC Code(s)**

23388-2