

4. Vaccination

Vaccination is the first consideration for the management of zoonotic illness in the workplace.

Q Fever

The number of people diagnosed with Q Fever is increasing in Queensland. Q Fever exposure is a higher risk than previously anticipated, particularly for anyone who works with animals, animal remains or in areas where animals have been.

Australian Immunisation register

Funded by the Meatworks industry the Australian Q Fever register was developed in 2002 to securely register the names of people that have received the Q Fever Vaccination or a positive skin test and have agreed to entry to the register. Employers with Q Fever risks used the register to identify workers that have immunity or vaccination to Q Fever. The Q Fever register has been moved to the Australian Immunisation Register.

Process of Vaccination:

- People who have already contracted Q Fever and have antibodies should not be vaccinated. The employer should contact an appropriate medical centre and schedule two doctor's visits, seven (7) days apart.
- Skin test is conducted to determine if the person has been exposed to Q Fever and has antibodies. A small amount of vaccine is injected just under the skin, this allows the immune system response to be assessed visually. Additionally, blood is drawn and sent for serology analysis to determine if Q Fever antibodies are present. The combination of the serology results and a skin test is used to identify if the person has already been exposed to Q Fever.
- Seven (7) days after a skin test a follow up visit to the doctor will review the site of the skin test to determine if the skin is red or raised or there is any indication that the body has reacted.
 - If a negative skin test is observed the person should be vaccinated against Q Fever. The worker should not be exposed to Q Fever risks until 2 weeks following vaccination
 - If a positive skin test is observed the person should not be vaccinated and can be registered with the Q Fever National Register.
 - Occasionally a person can receive a mild reaction not a strong positive nor a clear negative, in these instances a half dose of vaccination can be provided a week apart to ensure that the person does not have a severe reaction to the vaccination but is still protected.
 - Confirmation of entry to the Q Fever register is sent to the worker, this includes the vaccination register number. This number is used to link the worker to the employer.

Lyssa Virus / Hendra Virus

Some Australian bats carry Australian bat lyssavirus (ABLV), that can be caught by humans (only 3 recorded cases since 1996). Rabies vaccination is used to protect people that are exposed to Lyssa Virus or Hendra Virus or animals that are likely to carry a risk of Lyssa virus or Hendra virus. Although rabies is not considered a serious threat in Australia the Lyssa Virus or Hendra Virus is very similar and the rabies virus.

Process of vaccination:

Two rabies vaccines are available in Australia. Each one requires three intramuscular doses - an initial dose, a second dose after 7 days and a third at 21 or 28 days. It takes one month to administer the vaccine over 3 spread out doses.