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Falsified rabies vaccine: Zimbabwe

Falsified rabies vaccine is circulating through unauthorised sources in Zimbabwe

On 22 January 2025, the Medicines Control Authority of Zimbabwe announced that falsified rabies vaccine is circulating through unauthorised sources in Zimbabwe [1]. They report this falsified product poses a significant threat to public health due to the possibility of lack of efficacy, harmful components and the risk of treatment failure in preventing rabies, a fatal disease.

Advice for travellers

- Travellers should avoid contact with all animals. Rabies is preventable with prompt post-exposure treatment.
- Following a possible exposure, wounds should be thoroughly cleansed, and an urgent local medical assessment sought, even if the wound appears trivial.
- Post-exposure treatment and advice should be in accordance with [national guidelines](#).
- Travellers are advised to check the packaging to ensure they receive registered vaccine in Zimbabwe [1].
- Travellers who think they may have received falsified vaccine in Zimbabwe and are still in Zimbabwe are advised to seek advice from the pharmacy/medical centre where they were vaccinated.
- Travellers who have returned to the UK but received rabies vaccine in Zimbabwe should contact their GP or travel clinic for advice whether more vaccine is required.

Advice for health professionals

Health care professionals with concerns about a patient who may have received falsified rabies vaccine in Zimbabwe can call the [UK Health Security Agency Rabies and Immunoglobulin Service \(RIGS\)](#) for further advice.

Resources

- [UK Health Security Agency: Rabies information leaflet for travellers](#)
- [UKHSA: Rabies post exposure treatment: management guidelines](#)
- [Rabies in brief](#)

References

1. [Medicines Control Authority of Zimbabwe. Circular No 03 of 2025. Alert on falsified Abhayrab rabies vaccine distributed by unauthorised sources. 22 January 2025. \[Accessed 4 February 2025\]](#)