



World Rabies Day: Making the most of your event

Thank you! By organizing a World Rabies Day event you are taking part in a global movement to put an end to the unnecessary suffering caused by rabies. You and people like you are what make World Rabies Day the global phenomenon that it is.

This manual was created to help you plan and communicate your World Rabies Day event to different audiences. We welcome your feedback to improve this resource – email us at campaigns@rabiesalliance.org with your suggestions.

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The Basics of World Rabies Day

When is World Rabies Day?

World Rabies Day is held annually on September 28. It is the anniversary of the death of Louis Pasteur, who developed the first rabies vaccine and laid the foundations for rabies prevention as we know it.

What is World Rabies Day?

World Rabies Day is held on September 28 every year with hundreds of thousands of people organizing or participating in events and activities to celebrate rabies prevention efforts and unite against rabies. Whether you're a veterinarian, a medical professional, a teacher, a dog-lover or even someone who just cares about your community, it is a chance to organize or take part in an event that raises awareness about rabies and its prevention.

It is the first and only global advocacy, education, and awareness campaign for rabies. It has the support of all international health organizations and major stakeholders including the WHO, OIE, FAO and the US CDC, among many others.

To date it has reached over 150 million people with rabies prevention messages and re-initiated rabies prevention in many parts of the world. World Rabies Day continues to reach new audiences: in 2021 over 270 events were registered on the GARC website, from 58 countries.



Each year a different theme is selected for World Rabies Day.

For 2022, the World Rabies Day theme is ***Rabies: One Health, Zero Deaths***. This year's theme highlights and reminds the global community that rabies elimination is possible, that we have a goal (Zero by 30) and that we stand united against this dreadful disease. This year's theme is a message of hope and positivity that provides a refreshing break from the negative messaging and reports from COVID. Importantly for rabies, we have a strong global community, we have the tools and the expertise, and we have a goal for the elimination of human deaths from dog-mediated rabies. So, the message focuses on coming together to make positive change and achieve what we know is possible: rabies elimination.

There are hundreds of ways to act in line with this year's theme, ranging from individuals working together to make a difference in your community, to national government ministries working together on a joint anti-rabies campaign. Collaborate by organizing local dog walks or fun-runs to raise money

and awareness about rabies, work with a local shelter to ensure that all the animals are vaccinated against rabies, host webinars or conferences to get different organizations or groups to work together and collaborate together against rabies. You can always host a vaccination drive to ensure that dogs and cats are vaccinated against rabies – protecting them and the communities that they live with against this dreadful disease. You can also conduct awareness and education campaigns and teach the community about rabies and its prevention. Ultimately, all these actions work to *End Rabies*.

What is a World Rabies Day event?

A World Rabies Day event is any event or activity held on or near September 28 that:

- promotes awareness about rabies prevention, and/or
- reduces rabies transmission (such as vaccinating dogs)

Why should I register my event?

By registering your World Rabies Day event, you lend your voice and support towards raising awareness and ending this disease. Registering your event on the World Rabies Day platform of the GARC website will also help to promote the good work that you are doing. Your efforts will be displayed on the GARC website that reaches hundreds of thousands of people. Make sure that your efforts are recognized and that your voice is added to the call to end rabies.

We have also introduced a certificate of recognition where every registered event will receive a certificate of recognition from GARC thanking you for your support towards ending rabies. Display your certificate with pride as it lends credence to the work that you are doing.

Why does World Rabies Day help?

These events play a special role in supporting rabies prevention efforts by enabling and encouraging people to get involved, become aware of the disease and how it spreads, and understand what they can do to prevent it.

World Rabies Day is an opportunity to celebrate successes so far, build support for existing challenges, and increase awareness of rabies prevention in at-risk communities.

World Rabies Day builds a social and political environment that supports policy change, driving governments and stakeholders to prioritise rabies and attract resources for prevention and control programmes.

Registering your event

Go to <https://rabiesalliance.org/world-rabies-day/register> to create an account and register your event.

Your event will go live once it has been checked, usually within 24 hours.

You can also find registered events in your area: <https://rabiesalliance.org/world-rabies-day/events>.

Ideas for World Rabies Day

World Rabies Day is open to anyone and everyone who wants to take action for rabies prevention. By taking part you are joining thousands of people from all corners of the globe.

Any event that promotes rabies awareness and/or works towards rabies prevention qualifies as a World Rabies Day event. However, we've given you some ideas below to help you decide, and you can also get inspiration from others who are sharing their events online at: <https://rabiesalliance.org/world-rabies-day/events>.

The following questions may help you to decide what to do for World Rabies Day:

1. What would help prevent rabies in your community?

Most events focus on dog vaccination or raising public awareness, and it's best to focus on something that is needed in your community. Educating others about rabies is also important to ensuring the long-term success of rabies elimination.

2. Who can I get to help me?

- Contact local government, veterinarians, doctors, health workers, schools, colleges, and animal welfare organizations to see if they would like to get involved. Working together, your event will almost certainly have greater impact.
- Give local businesses the chance to get involved by providing financial or practical support. They may be willing to help by paying for vaccines for dogs, printing leaflets and posters, or supplying refreshments to volunteers.
- Remember to involve the media – newspapers and radio and TV stations are often willing to cover World Rabies Day events, and this multiplies the impact of your event. There is more about involving the media in the Event Communications section of this manual.

3. What resources are available?

- You may find a local business willing to help sponsor your event.
- GARC is here to help with advice, practical support, and online resources. GARC will promote some events on various platforms, including social media, if it is registered on the World Rabies Day page of the GARC website. GARC cannot help fund individual World Rabies Day events.
- We have lots of advice to help you plan and promote your event, at <https://rabiesalliance.org/world-rabies-day/event-resources>
- World Rabies Day logos you can use on your materials are available in multiple languages and formats <https://rabiesalliance.org/world-rabies-day/event-resources/logos>

- If resources are very limited, remember there are lots of things that you can do that cost little or no money.
- There are lots of free resources available on <https://rabiesalliance.org> for you to download and use at your event, including lesson plans for different age groups, posters, factsheets and videos.

Many of these resources are in various languages. Use the Search Resources function to narrow results by language, resource type, or to search for a keyword. <https://rabiesalliance.org/resources>

Ideas for events to raise awareness of rabies prevention

Awareness and fundraising event ideas

- Gather people together and hold a **Question and Answer session** with an expert (or use our rabies FAQs to help - <https://rabiesalliance.org/about/about-rabies>) and draw on the collective experiences of people in the audience. You could even do this on the radio!
- Hold a **dog show** that promotes responsible pet ownership and encourages owners to regularly vaccinate their dogs against rabies.
- Get local artists to paint a **World Rabies Day mural** on a wall. Include this year's key messages for rabies prevention. Remember to get permission from authorities or homeowners where needed.
- Organize World Rabies Day **information stands** at a community event, in a local store or at a community center.
- Create small teams of people to walk around and raise awareness about rabies. You can use some of the free materials available on the GARC website.
- Host an **art competition** for people to draw, paint or photograph dogs, people or communities to help raise funds and awareness for rabies. Read an inspirational story about how this was done here: <https://rabiesalliance.org/news/it-all-started-happy-dog-painting-inspiration-children-china>
- **Hand out leaflets** at airports and transportation terminals for travelers. You may also leave posters and leaflets in waiting areas to minimize face-to-face contact with other people.
- Host a **creative writing contest** for young people to share their stories about pets and the importance of protecting them from rabies.
- **Show a video**, with or without facilitated discussions afterwards. You can also share the video on different social media platforms.
- Get people in the community involved by organizing a **dog walk or fun run** to raise awareness.
- You can **ring the bells at your local church or town hall** on World Rabies Day to mark the day.
- At national sport events – have a short speech about rabies and hand out leaflets.
- Organize a World Rabies Day **tournament for a local sports event**.

- Organize **education sessions in schools** for children to learn about dog bite prevention, or rabies and responsible pet care. Free resources for teaching children are available online at <https://rabiesalliance.org/resources/search?type=55>
- Get local **performers to entertain at a rally** for World Rabies Day – you could get musicians, puppeteers, and dancers involved.
- Organize a **march or motorcycle rally** through your town or down your street to raise awareness. Remember to check whether this is permitted with your local authorities.

Events at home: Digital and online event ideas

- Organize **“Ask Me Anything” events** on Twitter or Facebook with an expert or a social media influencer (or use our rabies FAQs to help - <https://rabiesalliance.org/about/about-rabies>) and draw on the collective experiences of people in the audience.
- Share **posters, videos, or other education materials** about rabies on your social media. Free resources are available here: <https://rabiesalliance.org/resources/outreach>
- Hold a **digital pet show** that promotes responsible pet ownership and encourages owners to regularly vaccinate their dogs against rabies. Your pet just might become the next TikTok sensation or Instagram influencer!
- Get local artists to create **digital World Rabies Day art** to be posted on a digital wall. Include this year’s key messages for rabies prevention.
- Host a **Pinterest or Instagram art competition** for people to post drawings, paintings or photographs of dogs, people, or communities with specific hashtags to help raise funds and awareness for rabies. Read an inspirational story about an art auction that raised funds for a local shelter here: <https://rabiesalliance.org/news/it-all-started-happy-dog-painting-inspiration-children-china>. Or, you can work a little more outside the box and have **categories for comic strips, memes and GIFs!**
- Create **Direct Mail campaigns** that raise information on pet ownership and rabies prevention. You can also use this to direct people to your website or social media page with informational videos or virtual galleries.

Ideas for dog vaccination activities

- Organize a **mass dog vaccination event** with your local veterinarians and animal welfare groups – this could be done along with registration of owned dogs by your local authorities. Hand out information about dog bite prevention - you can download and print resources from the GARC website - <https://rabiesalliance.org/resources/search?type=904>
- Take a team to **vaccinate dogs in remote areas** that don’t have easy access to vaccines.
- Ask local veterinary clinics to hold **free or subsidized vaccination days** and help them to organize these events – you could also ask for companies to donate or subsidize vaccines.

Ideas for activities that encourage policy change

If you're interested in influencing your local authorities to implement rabies prevention programs, please view our Advocacy Toolkit at <https://caninerabiesblueprint.org/A-toolkit-for-influencing-policy>

It's all about you!

These are just a few possibilities. If you have an idea for something that isn't listed here, great! Make it happen – as long as it's aimed towards rabies prevention, we'd love it to be part of World Rabies Day.

Once you have your idea you need to start planning. See the Event Planning section for a checklist of what needs to be done. This will help guide you through the process.

Whatever you decide to do, please remember to **register your event** here:

<https://rabiesalliance.org/world-rabies-day/register>

Registering your event is the best way of making sure it has the impact that your hard work deserves – an impact on the local, national, and global level.

Key messages

This section provides you with suggested key messages around rabies prevention. You can use any of these as your main message for your particular audience, with others as supporting messages.

Audience	Message
Universal	Together we can end human deaths from dog-transmitted rabies by 2030.
	Rabies elimination is possible. Let's make the possibility a reality by 2030.
	Vaccinating dogs protects people too.
Prevention in rabies endemic countries	Vaccinate your dog. Protecting dogs against rabies helps protect you and your family too.
	Avoid dog bites: Learn to read a dog's body language. Don't tease or attack them.
	Teach children to always tell you if an animal bites or scratches them. Praise a child for doing this.

Messages in dog rabies free countries	Immediately wash a bite wound for 15 minutes and consult your doctor about vaccinations.
	<p>Avoid dog bites:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learn to read a dog's body language. Don't tease or attack them.• Ensure that your children remain safe from traumatic dog bites. Educate children about how to act around dogs to stay safe and build a lasting relationship with their companion animals.• Give dogs and cats the rights that they deserve by instilling responsible pet ownership in your community.

Policy makers	<p>Rabies-related deaths are preventable; simple and low-cost tools and strategies for rabies control and prevention exist.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of human rabies deaths can be prevented. • The world has all the tools it needs to end rabies deaths. <p>One Health or holistic rabies programs work and are within reach for even low- and middle-income countries – the crucial need lies in garnering the political will to take these programs forward.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human and animal health stakeholders need to work together to eliminate rabies. • Governments need to make rabies programs a priority. • Rabies disproportionately affects the poor, but elimination is within reach of even low-income countries. <p>Sustained national integrated rabies programs result in cost savings to national health budgets.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Controlling dog rabies through vaccination will reduce human healthcare costs. • National rabies programs reduce costs as well as deaths. • Investment in dog vaccination is the single most effective way of reducing the disease burden. <p>Rabies is a solvable problem that can lead to immediate (within an election cycle) results for national governments and international donors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well-designed rabies programs have a significant impact within a few years. <p>Rabies programs can be integrated into existing health systems and mechanisms, strengthening them in the process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing health systems will be strengthened by integrating rabies prevention programs. • Capacity building for rabies surveillance and control can strengthen health systems for the prevention of other diseases. • Capacity building for rabies control will strengthen (one) health systems / disease preparedness.
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	<p>Ending rabies is integrally linked to UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3, to ensure healthy lives and well-being, particularly SDG 3.3, to end the epidemics of neglected tropical diseases by 2030.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Freedom from dog-mediated human rabies is a <i>global public good</i>. <p>Ending rabies supports progress towards other Sustainable Development Goals, primarily those related to poverty, food security, economic growth, infrastructure, inequality, and global partnerships.</p> <p>A Global Strategic Plan has been developed to drive global rabies elimination towards the goal of Zero By 30.</p> <p>Rabies is still present in over 150 countries.</p> <p>We can eliminate human, dog and livestock deaths from dog-transmitted rabies by vaccinating 70% of dogs.</p> <p>Vaccinating 70% of dogs in at-risk areas can eliminate dog rabies.</p> <p>Rabies goes beyond country borders. National governments need to work together on the international stage.</p>
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Professionals from human and animal health sectors	Work together with doctors, veterinarians, educators, legislators, community workers, and others, to prevent rabies at the community level.
Community leaders	Work together with your community to improve dog vaccination rates and awareness of rabies prevention.
Awareness globally	<p>Over 59,000 people die of rabies every year worldwide, and millions more seek life-saving treatment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Someone dies of rabies every 9 minutes – these deaths can be stopped. A child dies every 15 minutes from rabies – save our future by acting now. 29 million people seek life-saving treatment to prevent rabies every year. <p>Rabies deaths are a direct consequence of poverty and inequality in access to health services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many rabies deaths are a result of poverty. People die of rabies because they cannot get the medical that they need. <p>Rabies is 100% preventable with current knowledge, technology, and vaccines – improving access to human and dog vaccines will save more lives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rabies is 100% preventable – access to vaccines will save lives. The world has the tools to end rabies. Vaccinating dogs saves human lives. Vaccinating dogs protects people and dogs. A vaccinated dog is a soldier in the fight against rabies. Fear of rabies leads to the indiscriminate slaughter of millions of dogs every year and doesn't stop rabies. Vaccination is the answer.

Planning an event

Once you have decided what you are going to do for World Rabies Day, you need to work out who is taking part, where and when it is going to happen, and what you need to do to make it a reality.

Who are you working with?

Are you organizing the event on your own, as an organization, or as part of a partnership? Try to set expectations around responsibilities early so everyone knows what is expected of them.

Recruit volunteers to help you if you need them.

Where will you hold your event?

Do you need any permission to hold your event in your chosen location? Are there any particular aspects that you need to consider such as the weather elements, lighting, seating and so on?

When will you hold your event?

Set the exact date and time.

World Rabies Day, September 28, is a good day to hold events because it coincides with so many others and creates media interest, but it does not have to be that day. You should select the exact date and time of your event depending on what it is, what is practical, and what best suits the people you want to attend your event. Remember to consider the needs of your community when planning the time and date. Some communities may not be able to participate if the event is held on a weekday as they may be at work. Keep this in mind when planning your event.

What is your budget?

Some events, like a lesson to school children or an awareness rally, can be held for very little money.

If you are planning a bigger event with a large budget, you may need to consider a back-up plan in case of funding challenges.

Remember to give local businesses the opportunity to support your event through sponsorship. In-kind gifts like printing and refreshments for volunteers can also be very helpful.

If you need posters but printing is a problem, try asking a local school to get the children to make posters for you or a local business to sponsor them. This expands the impact of your event too.

What do you need to do?

Before the event

- Register your event on the World Rabies Day page of the GARC website (<https://rabiesalliance.org/world-rabies-day/register>).
- Create a plan or timeline of all the things that you need to make your event run smoothly, both before the event and on the day.
- Hold regular planning meetings to make sure that everything is on track. Make sure you have contact numbers for volunteers and that they have numbers to contact you.
- Remember to contact local authorities well in advance for assistance or any permission needed to hold your event. Invite them to take part.
- Contact local media to help promote your event. Radio stations will often promote events free of charge. Our Event Communications section below has more information about involving the media.

Advertising your event

- Announce the time, date and location well in advance.
- Keep reminding people about your event. Use social media to promote your event and encourage others to share the information.
- Contact your local media, asking them to announce your event – standard press (news) releases that you can modify are available in Appendix 1.
- Contact your local radio station – they might be willing to interview you about your event. You could even make this your event!
- Use social media networks – we will support you where we can. Connect with us at:
 - Facebook.com/GlobalAllianceforRabiesControl
 - Twitter.com/RabiesAlliance
 - Instagram.com/rabiesalliance
 - Youtube – Global Alliance for Rabies Control (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCSrVJyCjyDygXQVAYovgMGg>)
 - Remember to use #WorldRabiesDay and #EndRabiesNow

Remember to register your event on our website at <https://rabiesalliance.org/world-rabies-day/register>.

All events are shown on a world map (<https://rabiesalliance.org/world-rabies-day>) so you can see how you really are part of a global movement.

On the day

Everyone taking part in your event will need to know what to do and where they need to be.

Make sure an organizer is there early to welcome volunteers.

Assign an organizer or volunteer(s) to manage:

- other volunteers,
- performers, celebrities, and guests, and
- members of the public.

Make sure everyone knows who is responsible for what so, if they have a question or need something, they know whom to ask.

Look after your guests and volunteers. Make sure they have access to refreshments and shade. Providing food will help prevent them from wandering off!

Take lots of pictures and share them on your event page on the World Rabies Day platform.

- If you're able to tweet live from the event, tag @rabiesalliance and use the hashtags #WorldRabiesDay and #EndRabiesNow and we'll retweet as many tweets as possible.
- Take photos and share them with us via Facebook and Twitter or via your event's page on our website.

Have a backup plan in case things go wrong. Make sure you know what to do if it rains, if volunteers or guests don't show up, or if somebody gets hurt. Clean up after your event. Nobody is going to thank you if you leave a mess.

Remember to thank everyone who takes part. We hope they will thank you too but even if they don't, we would like to. Remember to register your event on our website at: <https://rabiesalliance.org/world-rabies-day/register>

After your event

Make a note of how things went and names and contact numbers of people who helped. This can help with planning future events.

Follow up with the media to see if they will run your story. If they didn't come to the event, offer to send them photos and/or submit a short write-up.

Share photos of your event on our [Facebook page](#) (GlobalAllianceforRabiesControl) or on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) (tag @rabiesalliance) and on your event platform of the World Rabies Day webpage.

Send a report of your event to your government. Rabies affects both human and animal health so remember to send it to all relevant departments.

A written note thanking businesses, organizations, dignitaries, and volunteers who took part is a memorable gesture. It is often worth making the extra effort because they may be able to help you in the future.

Let us know if you have ideas to help us improve World Rabies Day – email us at campaigns@rabiesalliance.org.

Keep in touch by signing up to our newsletter - <https://rabiesalliance.org/contact-us> .

Event Planning Checklist

Decide on your event

- ☐ Inform any authorities and get permission, if needed
- ☐ Choose a location or venue
- ☐ Make an event plan
- ☐ Recruit volunteers
- ☐ Offer businesses the opportunity to support your event with sponsorship
- ☐ What do you need from them? What is in it for them?
- ☐ Invite guests/speakers/celebrities/performers

Register your event

- ☐ Register your event on the World Rabies Day page of the GARC website (<https://rabiesalliance.org/world-rabies-day/register>)

Promote your event

- ☐ Organize printing of posters and leaflets
- ☐ Contact the media (see our Communications Toolkit)
- ☐ Share information on social media #WorldRabiesDay, #EndRabiesNow, @rabiesalliance
- ☐ Remind people regularly of the date and time of your event

Risk Management

- ☐ Do you need insurance - public liability, volunteers?
- ☐ Risk assessment – what could go wrong and what is your plan if it does?
- ☐ Appoint first aiders

Waste – how will you clean up after the event?

- ☐ Post-event clean-up arrangements
- ☐ Do you need any sterile services?

Refreshments

- ☐ Who will you provide refreshments for?
- ☐ What refreshments will you offer?
- ☐ Who is going to supply them?

The day before

- ☐ Contact volunteers and guests to check that they know where they need to be and when they need to arrive.

On the day

- ☐ Team briefing
- ☐ Organize a volunteer registration area
- ☐ Organize an area for guests
- ☐ Circulate contact list of staff and volunteers, and their responsibilities
- ☐ Thank people when they leave

After the event

- ☐ Clean up
- ☐ Thank you notes to volunteers, sponsors, and guests

De-brief

- ☐ What went well? What could you do better?
- ☐ Tell us! Share your experiences with GARC through our website, on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram

Event communications

This section primarily focuses on communicating with mainstream media – this includes newspapers, magazines, and news websites. It also provides some advice on using social media.

Contacting journalists may seem daunting at first, but they are always looking for new stories. Every year interesting World Rabies Day stories make the news, and your event could be one of them!

What, When, Who, Why, Where and How?

When you are preparing to contact the media think through the following:

What are you going to say?

Press releases that you can modify are available below. You can add details about your event to one of these templates or write your own release if you prefer.

Depending on the outlet you are contacting, look to also include:

- References to other events taking place in your country (or continent).
- Comments from relevant government departments (health, agriculture and/or animal health).
- National statistics or information about rabies – or discuss the lack of information as a barrier to saving lives.

If you are organizing a large event it may be worth holding a press conference. This is a good way of highlighting your work around rabies prevention and building awareness of the issue. It can also help to build support to influence the government to take action to eliminate rabies. There is more information about organizing a press conference later.

Background information on rabies is available in Appendix 3.

When are you going to contact them?

We recommend that you send your press release out **one week before your event**. If your event is taking place on World Rabies Day (September 28) then submit your release on or close to September 21. Follow up again with a telephone call a couple of days before the event.

Who are you going to contact?

Finding the best people to contact is sometimes challenging. It is often worth making enquiries about who to contact during your planning stage.

Study the publications you plan to approach. These could be local or national newspapers, relevant magazines and websites, and TV and radio news channels. Note the names of journalists who have covered other public health related issues.

Why will they be interested in your story?

This is an important question to ask yourself. To answer it you need to think about who you are contacting, who *their* audience is, and how you can tailor your approach to their needs. It may sound obvious but local outlets will be interested in local stories, national outlets will require details of national significance, publications aimed at young people will want a story that appeals to their audience, and so on.

You can use the *Key Messages* above, and the information in Appendix 3 to help you add relevant details.

Where are they and how are you going to contact them?

Think about inviting local journalists to attend your event. They are more likely to come if you have dignitaries, celebrities, or performers coming too.

Most press releases are sent via email and this is quickest and cheapest. However, journalists often receive thousands of emails a day and they don't have time to read them all. If you are sending your press release via email, make the subject line as relevant and interesting as possible.

Alternatively, a traditional letter can stand out as something different and attract a journalist's attention long enough to engage them in your story.

Whatever you do, follow up with a telephone call later in the week to see if they have had a chance to read the press release and ask if they want more information.

Radio and TV

A popular event for World Rabies Day is a question and answer session in which people talk about their experiences of rabies and can ask questions. It is also a great way of dispelling myths about rabies.

Doing this as a phone-in on a local radio station multiplies the impact of the discussion. If you are thinking of doing this, contact your local radio station underlining the public health importance of the subject.

Try to make sure you have at least one expert to answer questions, more if possible. Have a back-up plan in case there aren't many callers including:

- a script of things to say and stories to tell about rabies and rabies prevention,
- providing the radio show host with some pre-prepared questions to ask you, and
- arranging for volunteers to call in with pre-prepared questions.

You may find our Frequently Asked Questions and news feed helpful for this.

- Frequently asked questions: <https://rabiesalliance.org/resources/faqs>
- News feed: <https://rabiesalliance.org/news>

Press conferences

There needs to be a good story around the conference for media outlets to be prepared to send someone to a press conference. Some examples of things that can attract media interest are:

- Having a celebrity at the press conference.
- Having a press conference in conjunction with another event, such as a special mass vaccination or public awareness campaign. It will help if you can position your event as something out of the ordinary, possibly in terms of the numbers covered, or a new area or audience. (See our ideas document for some options.).
- Introducing new data about rabies prevention or highlighting the urgent concerns that need to be addressed in your area – a call to action could be included.
- Sharing some success stories about a recent event or program. Your organization or local municipality may have reduced the number of free-roaming dogs through a trap, vaccinate, neuter release program. This would be a great way to stand out and make a good media story.
- Having good or unique photos or video that will only be released at the press conference.

Structure of the press conference:

- Keep it short – journalists can be very busy, and you want to get the whole message across quickly.
- If you have a celebrity, make their appearance the main part of the press conference.
- Make a short statement about the issue you want to highlight and then allow questions to a panel. The panel could include a celebrity, government officials who are responsible for the issue, and someone from your organization.
- Don't have more than two or three speakers, and they should speak for a maximum of 5 minutes each.

Checklist before the press conference

- Provide enough notice for everyone to be able to participate.
- Advertise your press conference at least a week in advance.
- Send out a release to the media that includes:
 - Location
 - Date and time
 - Speakers (highlight the celebrity if you have one)
 - The main theme
 - Contact details

- Call the main media channels after you have sent this out, to encourage them to attend and try to get an idea of the numbers attending.
- It is worth checking the best time to hold a press conference in your area, but either 10-11am or 2:30-3pm seem to be the times when you get the most journalists to a press conference.
- Ensure that people can find the event location easily, that there is space for parking, and that there are banners or signs near the venue. Also, check the lighting and sound system, seating arrangements, make sure you have a backdrop, interview space, exhibition space (if you plan to have one) and power outlets for camera crews.
- Speeches for the media:
 - Keep speeches short – 5 minutes maximum. Make sure that you specify which parts you want the media to quote.
 - Distribute the key statement to journalists when you start the conference – this allows them to choose what they want and helps to avoid being misquoted.
 - If you do want to use a long speech, give it out as a hard copy, but don't cover the whole thing at the conference.
 - Avoid too many speakers as this can complicate and confuse the messages.
- You should have a chairperson to introduce speakers, explain the process, answer questions if needed and keep to deadlines.
- Put out refreshments such as tea, coffee, and snacks. Designate one or more staff members to welcome people and take their names and contact details – these can be added to your media contacts database for future stories.
- Create a “Media pack”. Give each journalist a media pack at the beginning of the conference that contains all the necessary information. It can include:
 - Printouts of the main speeches.
 - Information about your organization and work, particularly the issue you are focusing on at the press conference.
 - Background information about rabies in your area.
 - Background information about World Rabies Day.
 - The press release. This should include all the best quotes. Also send it to journalists who did not attend the press conference.
 - Photos.

You can use information from this manual in your pack.

- Have one of your staff or volunteers take photographs and also write a story about the release for your website or newsletter. You can also send out some of these photos and the story to journalists who did not attend the conference.

[Press Conference Checklist adapted from Amnesty International Campaigning Manual]

Social Media

More and more people are using social media to find and share information. You can use social media to promote your World Rabies Day activities. If you're talking about, or looking for, World Rabies Day on social media, please hashtag (#) **#WorldRabiesDay**.

This section provides an outline of how to get results from social media for those who are not familiar with Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

How to get results: Partner, Promote, Cross-Promote

The interactive nature of social media provides an ideal opportunity to share your World Rabies Day messages with current, new, and emerging audiences. Reaching these audiences via social media involves three steps: partner, promote, cross-promote.

- 1) Partner: Establish relationships with organizations involved in rabies prevention and overlapping issues. GARC may be able to assist in sharing your message if you include them into your communications using @RabiesAlliance (Twitter, Instagram) and @GlobalAllianceforRabiesControl on Facebook.
- 2) Promote: Distribute your messages to them.
- 3) Cross-promote: Share your partners' messages (where you feel comfortable doing so) and engage your audience by responding to their posts.

The following table provides a snapshot of some strategic ways to use Facebook and Twitter.

Social Media	Partner	Promote	Cross-promote
Facebook			
Like Facebook.com/GlobalAllianceforRabiesControl	Find and like organizations with a similar interest in rabies, e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health departments • Colleges of public health and veterinary medicine • Human and animal healthcare organizations • Animal welfare organizations 	Send periodic messages about rabies to all friends. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write a note to your wall to promote an upcoming event and encourage your friends to participate • Post educational and/or awareness messages • Update your status to include a countdown to your rabies event and/or World Rabies Day 	Respond to other people's posts about rabies-related information. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use current friends to engage with new collaborators • Highlight other World Rabies Day events and use them as an opportunity to promote your own.

Twitter			
<p>Follow Twitter.com/RabiesAlliance</p>	<p>Seek out and follow other organizations with an interest in rabies, e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health departments • Colleges of public health and veterinary medicine • Human and animal healthcare organizations • Animal welfare organizations 	<p>Send periodic tweets to promote upcoming events or initiatives. Use hashtag #WorldRabiesDay and #EndRabiesNow</p> <p>Remember a tweet is a maximum of 280 characters but can include images and links to other webpages.</p> <p>Tweet event updates in real time.</p> <p>Tweet about local or national rabies stories.</p>	<p>Retweet tweets from @rabiesalliance and any other rabies related tweets.</p> <p>Include @rabiesalliance in tweets that are relevant to rabies.</p> <p>Follow media outlets that have twitter pages. Watch for opportunities to contact them about your rabies events.</p>
Instagram			
<p>Follow Instagram.com/RabiesAlliance</p>	<p>Search and follow relevant stakeholders and influencers with an interest in your field of work e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • human health • animal welfare • dogs • rabies prevention 	<p>Share posts and stories about your work on rabies prevention, how it is helping communities, saving lives and promoting animal welfare.</p> <p>Remember, links can only be used in the bio section (unless you have thousands of followers)</p>	<p>Interact with other relevant stakeholders through messages, sharing their stories and tagging them and leaving comments on their posts.</p> <p>Use hashtags to find relevant media posts as a way to promote your messages.</p>

Appendix 1: Modifiable press releases

Use these press releases to interest the media in your event.

The text marked in red needs to be modified or deleted to suit your event or organization.

The modifiable press releases have been kept on separate pages for your own ease-of-use.

OPTION #1

[Your Organization's Information/Letterhead Here]

For Release: [For Immediate Release or Embargoed Until]

Contact: [Name, Phone Number & Email]

Rabies: One Health, Zero Deaths

[insert town/city/county] joins World Rabies Day 2022

[City, State & Date] – World Rabies Day, a global campaign to help prevent the spread of the world's most fatal disease, received a boost today in **[insert name of city]**, when supporters pledged to take action in their neighborhoods.

World Rabies Day is being facilitated by the international charity, [Global Alliance for Rabies Control](#), and the global series of events will culminate on September 28 – World Rabies Day. This year's theme is *Rabies: One Health, Zero Deaths*. By working together, we can all play a role in keeping people and animals safe from rabies.

In **[insert name of city]**, activists will add to the momentum by **[What local organization is doing, where and when (e.g., rabies vaccination clinics, educational seminars, events, etc.) will take place at/on (locations, dates and times). [Insert who is invited to attend, etc; include fee information, or free services, etc.]**.

[Optional – add supporting quote from an organization executive here]. “Rabies is a global problem that we can all play a role in defeating.” says **[insert name and title.]**

The aim of this year's World Rabies Day's theme, *Rabies: One Health, Zero Deaths*, is to showcase the role of rabies in One Health and to stand united to make positive change and work together achieve what we know is possible: rabies elimination. According to Professor Louis Nel, Executive Director of the Global Alliance for Rabies Control, “We can save the lives of tens of thousands of people that die needlessly each year from rabies by raising awareness of the disease and taking the correct preventative measures. Rabies is a global problem with a solution.”

Additional information is available online at **[Your organization's WRD event page]** and at <https://rabiesalliance.org> or by calling **[Contact Name and Number here]**.

[Organization Name]

[Address (Street, City, Zip)]

[Phone #] [Email/Website]

[Contact Name]

[Contact Title]

###

OPTION #2

[Your Organization's Information/Letterhead Here]

For Release: [For Immediate Release or Embargoed Until]

Contact: [Name, Phone Number & Email]

[Organization Name here] takes local action as part of the global World Rabies Day campaign.

- Rabies is preventable but continues to cause death and suffering to people and animals.
- Global calls for action encourage medical and veterinary services to work together to eliminate rabies.
- Local activists can become agents of change that work towards a world free from rabies.

[Place & Date] From Afghanistan to Zimbabwe, people are promoting rabies awareness and prevention this World Rabies Day, September 28. Every event contributes towards the creation of an international movement to put an end to the suffering and death caused by rabies.

Professor Louis Nel, Executive Director of the Global Alliance for Rabies Control – the coordinators of World Rabies Day, said: “Vaccinating animals saves lives and the global elimination of rabies is possible. World Rabies Day reflects the fundamental principle we must unite against rabies to save the lives of people and animals.”

[Include details about your World Rabies Day event]

Who: [Your organization name].

What: [Name or description of the World Rabies Day event]

Where: [Where the event is taking place (e.g., rabies vaccination clinics, educational seminars, events, etc.)]

When: [locations, dates and times].

Other information: [Include who is invited to attend, etc; include fee information, or free services, etc.].

[Insert a quote from your organization.]

###

Additional information is available online at [Your organization's website address or the event page on the rabiesalliance.org website] and at <https://rabiesalliance.org/world-rabies-day>.

[Send with background information below.]

Background information for press releases

About rabies

Around 59,000 people die from rabies annually, with over 99% of these deaths occurring in Africa and Asia. The majority of these deaths occur as a result of people being bitten by an infected dog. Up to 60% of all dog bites and rabies deaths occur in children under 15 years of age. This means that one child dies every 15 minutes from rabies.

Dogs are major victims of the disease too. Millions of dogs are killed every year as a result of mass culling through misguided attempts to control or eliminate the disease. In addition, hundreds of thousands of dogs suffer and die lonely deaths from rabies.

Rabies is 99.9% fatal, but it is also 100% preventable. Eliminating the disease by vaccinating dogs protects them and stops transmission to people. Despite the existence of effective, relatively low-cost solutions to control animal rabies, people and animals are still dying needless deaths.

About World Rabies Day

World Rabies Day, held on September 28 every year, was initiated by GARC in 2007 to create a global opportunity for people to unite in increasing awareness of rabies prevention. Since then, it has grown year on year, with thousands of people organizing and participating in local, regional and national events, on or around September 28. Learn more at <https://rabiesalliance.org/world-rabies-day>

About the Global Alliance for Rabies Control

The Global Alliance for Rabies Control (GARC) is the leading non-profit organization that aims to eliminate deaths from dog rabies by 2030. GARC works with governments, veterinary, public health and educational experts, and communities to facilitate policy change and build capacity to eliminate rabies in areas hardest hit by the disease. For more information about rabies and GARC's work, visit <https://rabiesalliance.org>.

Appendix 2: Public Service Announcements

General Radio PSA

Every year around 59,000 people die from rabies, over one person every ten minutes. Rabies is 100% preventable and prevention starts with the animal owner. Join us on September 28th in promoting rabies prevention awareness and education by celebrating World Rabies Day. Let's end rabies together! To learn more or to get involved visit www.rabiesalliance.org. That's www.rabiesalliance.org

Modifiable Radio PSA

Every year around 59,000 people die from rabies - that's one person every nine minutes! Rabies is 100% preventable and prevention starts with the animal owner. In honor of World Rabies Day, please join the [Agency Name] on [Date & Time] at [Place] in promoting rabies prevention awareness and education by participating in [Event]. [include event details: Who is welcome, whether there are fees or if it is free, etc.]. Let's end rabies together! To learn more or to get involved in this initiative please call [Phone #] or go to [Web site]. That's [Repeat Phone # and/or web site].

Appendix 3: Background on rabies

Overview

Rabies has been terrorizing humans and animals for 4,000 years. It is a zoonotic disease (transmitted between animals and humans), usually via a bite wound inflicted by an infected animal, although scratches may also be a risk. More than 99% of human cases are a result of exposure to a rabid dog.

Rabies is currently responsible for 59,000 human deaths every year, in addition to the deaths of millions of dogs due to both the virus and their indiscriminate culling prompted by fear of the disease.

Annual economic losses because of the disease are around 8.6 billion US dollars, mostly due to premature deaths, but also because of spending on human vaccines, lost income for victims of animal bites, and other costs.

Prognosis

Following exposure to the virus, the onset of symptoms can take anywhere from a few days to over a year; however, the average is 1 to 12 weeks.

The first symptoms of rabies are similar to those of the flu. As the disease progresses, the person can experience delirium, abnormal behavior, and hallucinations, as well as the famed hydrophobia and foaming at the mouth (related to the paralysis of swallowing muscles). However, these symptoms are not always present, making rabies diagnosis so challenging.

Once symptoms manifest, rabies is 99.9% fatal with only a handful of survivors ever recorded. However, if people are given a course of vaccinations immediately after exposure to a rabid animal and before symptoms become evident, the disease can be prevented.

Prevention

Rabies is preventable. The tools and science to stop the extensive suffering, loss of life, and financial burden of rabies already exist. The most cost-effective and feasible means to prevent rabies is to vaccinate domestic dogs. By vaccinating enough dogs, we can eliminate the disease, saving both human and animal lives globally.

Geography

Although rabies is found on every continent, except Antarctica, it is well controlled or even eliminated in most developed countries. Today over 95% of human victims are from Africa and Asia, most from marginalized and impoverished rural communities. The World Health Organization considers rabies one of 20 Neglected Tropical Diseases.

Rabies has been known to decimate numbers of endangered species, for example the Ethiopian Wolf.

A neglected disease that perpetuates poverty

Rabies is a preventable disease that overwhelmingly afflicts the poor, both in terms of its death toll and the financial burden associated with the disease.

With a survival rate of less than 0.1%, those exposed to the virus face a stark choice: go in search of post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP, the series of vaccines and immunoglobulin that prevent the onset of the disease) or die. In some cases, PEP costs more than the monthly household income and families are known to either go into debt to pay for PEP or sell livestock on which they depend for income; both are options that negatively affect families' future prospects. Sometimes, when multiple family members are exposed to the virus, families are forced to choose which person receives treatment and which person will die – these are terrifying and impossible choices that people are forced to make because of rabies.

Dogs

Countless animals die after suffering the horrific clinical symptoms of rabies. Dogs also suffer from a second tragedy: fear of rabies transmission from dogs regularly prompts dog culls in which animals are killed indiscriminately. This creates a territorial vacuum and encourages new dogs to move into the area, before the process starts again. World experts agree that dog culling does not stop rabies.

Some key challenges to rabies prevention

- **Lack of awareness** – this is a problem at all levels of society, from those most at risk to governments.
- **Lack of coordination** – as a zoonotic disease, prevention often falls under the remit of various agencies. To get sustainable results, it is essential that these agencies work together in their approach to tackling the problem.
- **Lack of data** – accurate surveillance (or monitoring) of rabies incidence is critical to a true understanding of the actual burden.
- **Lack of capacity** – this includes knowledge, the sufficient availability of quality vaccines and immunoglobulin (at a price people can afford), and networks to support supply.

Preventing dog rabies is the key to saving human lives

Dog vaccination is the key to preventing the disease in humans by stopping the disease at its source. The immunity of vaccinated dogs (and other domestic animals) also offers a barrier of protection between potentially rabid wild animals and people.

All dogs and cats should regularly be vaccinated against rabies, where required by law.

What to do when an animal bites someone:

- A dog or cat that bites a person needs to be examined by a veterinarian immediately.
- The animal may require monitoring for 10 days.

- Report any illness or unusual behavior by the animal to a veterinarian immediately.

What to do when your animal gets bitten by another animal:

- Consult your veterinarian immediately and have your veterinarian examine your animal and assess your animal's vaccination needs.
- Contact local animal control if the bite was from a stray or wild animal.
- Monitor your animal for a specified time period by state law or local ordinance (usually at least 45 days) if an unvaccinated or wild animal bit your pet.

What to do with the human bite victim:

Following exposure to rabies, time is of the essence.

- The wound needs to be washed thoroughly with soap and running water for at least 15 minutes.
- The victim then needs to seek urgent medical care and exposure assessment.

Prompt and appropriate post-exposure prophylaxis after being bitten and before the disease develops can stop rabies infection and prevent the disease.

Post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) is a course of vaccinations that protects against rabies after exposure to the virus.

In some cases, particularly for people who are considered at high risk of exposure, pre-exposure vaccinations (PrEP) are given. If subsequently exposed to rabies, the patient still needs to seek medical attention and receive rabies booster vaccinations but does not need immunoglobulin injections.

PrEP is particularly important for people who are, or will be, far away from medical services.

Appendix 4: Introducing World Rabies Day to your colleagues

This is a short overview of World Rabies Day to help you tell your colleagues all about World Rabies Day and get them involved in events as well.

Rabies: Did you know?

- Rabies is a fatal viral disease mainly transmitted to humans through dog bites.
- Rabies is 100% preventable by vaccination.
- An estimated 5 billion people are at risk of rabies.
- 22 million people are exposed annually to rabies.
- Around 59,000 die every year from rabies.
- Around half the victims of rabies are children younger than 15 years old.
- Every dog bite in dog rabies endemic countries is considered a risk of exposure. This causes the exposed person huge amounts of anxiety and expense.
- Elimination of rabies in dogs would reduce the current number of human rabies deaths by over 95%.

Why does rabies still cause deaths?

- **Rabies continues to circulate in dog populations.**
 - 95% of rabies exposures are from dogs.
 - Unvaccinated dogs help to maintain and spread the virus to other animals and to people.
 - Roaming dog populations are often difficult to reach and are left unvaccinated and uncared for by communities.
- **There is a general lack of awareness about rabies and aspects important to rabies elimination.**
 - Responsible dog ownership: Owners must take responsibility for the health and well-being of their dogs and pets. They must ensure that their animals are vaccinated against rabies and are treated humanely.
 - Rabies prevention education and awareness: When people are bitten by a suspect rabid animal, they need to seek post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP). This includes wound washing at home, anti-rabies vaccines and potentially rabies immunoglobulin. If people are not educated, they do not know what to do when exposed and suffer because of it.
- **Rabies vaccines are not accessible to all.**
 - Rabies disproportionately affects the poorest communities who often do not have access to basic healthcare, including rabies post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP; vaccines and immunoglobulin).

- Rabies PEP is often only available at major health centers. Therefore, people must pay to travel long distances from rural areas to major cities to receive treatment. This is often too expensive for many poor families.
- The costs of PEP can be prohibitively expensive for many families, costing more than a family's entire monthly income.
- **Rabies is a forgotten disease of the poor.**
 - Rabies is a disease where no one survives to tell the tale. People end up dying quiet and lonely deaths in poor and rural communities.
 - Rabies has been effectively controlled in economically developed countries, therefore many of the people who are able to support rabies elimination remain unaware of the true scourge of this disease.
 - Due to a lack of awareness, donors often turn their attention to other diseases that are making headlines.

What is World Rabies Day?

WHAT:	A day of declaration and action
WHY:	To raise global awareness about rabies To promote education in local communities to control and prevent rabies
WHERE:	All around the world!
WHEN:	Every year on September 28

2022 THEME: Rabies: One Health, Zero Deaths

World Rabies Day can help attract:

- international media,
- new partners,
- donor organizations and institutions, and
- international NGOs for capacity building.

World Rabies Day encourages:

- Professional and community networks to spread rabies prevention messages.
- People to unite against a common cause.
- New partnerships and initiatives against rabies.

Appendix 5: Additional resources:

Become a certified rabies educator

The best way to prepare for your upcoming World Rabies Day event is to be assured that you have the correct, life-saving knowledge about rabies and its prevention. Be confident when answering questions from the press or from people at your event. Become a certified rabies educator by undertaking the Rabies Educator Certificate (REC). This is a free, online course open to anyone interested. You will receive a certificate from GARC upon completion of the course to prove your knowledge.

You can access this course and others at: <https://education.rabiesalliance.org>

World Rabies Day resources

We have a variety of World Rabies Day logos that are available in multiple languages. If your language is not there, you can contact GARC to have it translated and made in your own language.

You can find all the logos, as well as this year's themed logos, banners, and social media frames at: <https://rabiesalliance.org/world-rabies-day/event-resources/logos>

Share your events with the world

You can register your World Rabies Day event at: <https://rabiesalliance.org/world-rabies-day/register>

Only registered events:

- are promoted on the GARC website and social media streams,
- will receive a certificate of recognition for their participation in World Rabies Day,
- stand a chance to be entered into the World Rabies Day awards,
- show the rest of the world the strength and commitment of the rabies prevention movement in your country.

Thank you, and good luck! We wish every success for your event and thank you for your efforts towards raising global awareness about rabies.