

# New Zealand reveals first-ever rabies death

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New Zealand revealed its first-ever rabies case Thursday, saying the viral disease had killed a patient who caught it abroad but there was no risk to the public.

Doctors used "full infection control measures" at the two hospitals where the case was treated, first in Whangarei on the North Island, then in nearby Auckland, the [health ministry](#) said.

"Person to person transmission of rabies is extremely rare, almost unknown, so there is no risk to members of the public," the ministry said in a statement.

Rabies is usually spread by the saliva of an infected animal that bites someone.

The patient, who was not identified, was suspected of having the disease when first admitted to hospital in early March.

Laboratory results later confirmed it was the first-ever case of rabies in New Zealand, home to five million people.

"New Zealand does not have rabies in its animal or [human populations](#), and this case does not change our rabies-free status," the health ministry said.

"Travelers should be aware, however, that there are thousands of rabies cases reported in humans around the world each year, including a

number of countries in our part of the world," said director of public health Nick Jones.

He urged people to get vaccinated before traveling to countries where rabies is common.

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