

4. National Rabies Control Programme (NRCP)

Why in News?

- The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has recently launched the National Rabies Control Programme (NRCP) for prevention and control of Rabies.

Highlights

- Provision of rabies vaccine & rabies immunoglobulin through national free drug initiatives;
- Training on appropriate animal bite management, prevention and control of rabies, surveillance and intersectoral coordination;
- Strengthening surveillance of animal bites and rabies deaths reporting;
- Creating awareness about rabies prevention
- Rabies is a vaccine-preventable, zoonotic, viral disease.
- It is caused by a Ribonucleic Acid (RNA) virus that is present in the saliva of a rabid animal (dog, cat, monkey, etc).
- It is invariably transmitted following a bite of an infected animal that leads to deposition of the saliva and the virus in the wound.
- Once clinical symptoms appear, rabies is virtually 100% fatal. The death invariably occurs in four days to two weeks due to cardio-respiratory failure.
- In up to 99% of cases, domestic dogs are responsible for rabies virus transmission to humans.
- The incubation period varies from 2–3 months but may vary from 1 week to 1 year, or rarely even more.
- **The first symptoms of rabies may be similar to flu and may last for a few days, which includes:**
 - Fever, Headache, Nausea, Vomiting, Anxiety, Confusion, Hyperactivity, Difficulty swallowing, Excessive salivation, Hallucinations, Insomnia
- India is endemic for rabies, and accounts for 36% of the world's rabies deaths.
- It causes 18 000-20 000 deaths every year. About 30-60% of reported rabies cases and deaths in India occur in children under the age of 15 years as bites that occur in children often go unrecognized and unreported.
- In India, dogs are responsible for about 97% of human rabies, followed by cats (2%), jackals, mongooses and others (1%). The disease is endemic throughout the country.