

<http://www.cnn.com/2004/HEALTH/04/03/vaccine.recall/index.html>

## **Rabies vaccines recalled**

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(CNN) -- A vaccine maker is recalling thousands of doses of rabies vaccine after one product lot tested positive for the live vaccine.

The doses with the live vaccine, which could give someone rabies, were not distributed.

But Aventis Pasteur is recalling four other batches of Imovax as a precaution, the Lyon, France-based company said Friday.

The recalled vaccine, made in Lyon, was distributed between September 23, 2003, and April 2, 2004, the company said in a statement.

Rabies vaccine is made by inactivating -- killing -- live virus. Injections of the killed virus then stimulate the body's own immune system to develop antibodies that would kill live virus.

That process went awry at the company's plant in Lyon, where a bulk vaccine filter failed, said Len Lavenda, in a telephone interview with CNN from the company's U.S. headquarters in Swiftwater, Pennsylvania. The filter has been fixed.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said the risk to anyone who may have received the vaccine is small, but cautioned that people who received rabies vaccine in those months should contact their health care providers.

Two groups of people get rabies vaccine: those who have been bitten by an animal that is rabid or suspected of being rabid, and those at risk of being bitten -- such as veterinarians, zookeepers and people traveling to regions where rabies is common.

Last year, in the United States, about 18,000 people at risk of being bitten got the vaccine as a prevention and another 40,000 got it after being bitten.

The only people who need to do something as a result of the recall are those who received the vaccine preventively, Lavenda said. The others, in addition to getting the vaccine, would have been given immune globulin, which contains antibodies that kill live virus. Aventis will pay for those people to get an injection of immune globulin, he said.

The company is also recalling vaccines that were distributed to 18 other countries, and will be sending its customers information about the recall on Monday, Lavenda said.

Rabies is a viral infection that is mostly associated with animals. Humans contract it by being bitten by an infected animal, the company said.

Human rabies is rare in the United States: Since 1990, 39 cases have been diagnosed.