

### A Rare Transmission of Rabies Through Kidney Transplant

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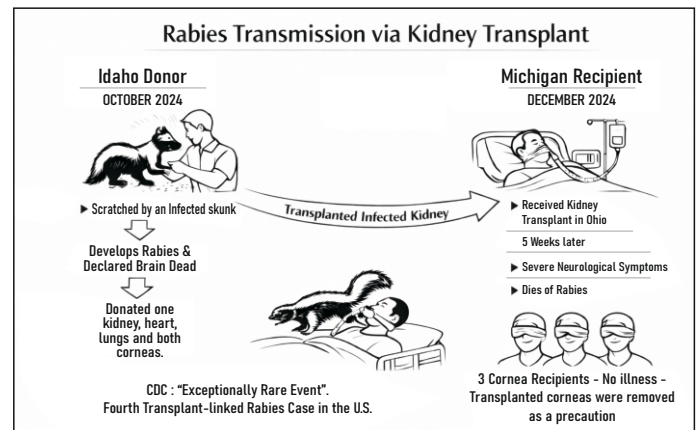
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A Michigan man died of rabies after receiving a kidney transplant from a donor who was later found to have died from the same infection—an episode health officials have described as “exceptionally rare.”

According to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the patient underwent a kidney transplant at an Ohio hospital in December 2024. About five weeks later, he developed tremors, leg weakness, confusion and urinary incontinence. His condition showed rapid decline and he died. Although the family had reported no contact with animals, postmortem testing confirmed rabies.

Investigators then reviewed the donor's medical history. The donor, an Idaho man, had been scratched by a skunk, followed by bleeding but no bite. Weeks later, he became confused, struggled to walk and swallow, and experienced hallucinations. He was declared brain dead, and several organs were retrieved for donation. Subsequent testing of kidney tissue detected a rabies virus strain consistent with bat exposure, suggesting a rare chain of transmission—from bat to skunk, to donor, and then to recipient.

The CDC said this was only the fourth documented case of transplant-related rabies in the United States since 1978. Three cornea recipients from the same donor underwent graft removal, received PEP, and remained asymptomatic. Experts stressed that while tragic, the overall risk remains extremely low.



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