



# RABIES

*Control and Bite*

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ADPH

Alabama Department of Public Health

Division of Epidemiology • Zoonotic Disease Branch

## *About the Cover*

*The picture on the cover is an artist's rendition of St. Hubert, the patron saint of rabies victims. As rabies posed a deadly threat in medieval Europe, peasants that needed help turned to St. Hubert. His shrine near Liege, Belgium, drew hundreds of the faithful to pray for those suffering from this dangerous and deadly disease.*

*St. Hubert used iron bars or crosses that were heated red-hot and applied to wounds of medieval European peasants. Since it was thought that this was a miracle cure, and to some extent it was an effective treatment, some individuals would wear the keys as amulets or place the keys into the walls of houses to protect all believers from rabies.*

*The keys were irons, heated red hot, and applied to wounds left by rabid animals. Although agonizingly painful, this method actually helped on occasion by providing a primitive technique of sterilization, to reduce the rabies virus load at the bite sites. Even today, cleansing of a bite wound is the first step in any post-exposure treatment regimen for rabies.*

*Because not all villagers were fortunate enough to make a trip to his shrine in distant Belgium, many utilized iron bars or crosses known as the "keys" of St. Hubert as jewelry or displays in their dwellings. These "cures" were seen as miracles by the peasants. As time progressed, scholars denounced the keys of St. Hubert, but belief among the peasantry remained up until the late nineteenth century.*