

IDRS Infectious Disease Reporting System

Disease Reporting 24 Hours a Day

Columbus Public Health and Franklin County Public Health

BRUCELLOSIS

Brucellosis is caused by a group of bacteria which typically infect cattle, bison, pigs, sheep, goats, dogs, and humans. Wild rabbits and rodents have been known to transmit the disease to livestock.

Symptoms

Symptoms generally appear within 5 to 60 days, but may take up to a year.

- The most common symptom is fever, often accompanied by chills, sweating and weakness.
- Insomnia, sexual impotence, headache, lack of appetite, depression and joint pain may also occur.
- Symptoms may continue for a long time if left untreated.
- Brucellosis can result in serious infections of the brain or lining of the heart.

Transmission

- Brucellosis is rare in the United States, but is more common in Asia, Africa, Central and South America, Eastern Europe, and the Mediterranean.
- The most common way to be infected is by eating or drinking contaminated milk products, including unpasteurized milk, ice cream, or cheese. Eating undercooked meat could also cause infection.
- Laboratory workers, hunters, or meat industry workers can breathe in or touch the bacteria from lab cultures or animal carcasses.
- People who work with live animals can be infected through accidental needlesticks with animal vaccine, or by helping animals birth babies.
- Direct person-to-person spread of brucellosis is extremely rare. Mothers who are breastfeeding may transmit the infection to their infants. Sexual transmission could also occur.

Treatment

- A doctor may send a blood or bone marrow sample to a lab to test for Brucellosis.
- Brucellosis is treated with an extended course of antibiotics. The infection can relapse in some cases.

Prevention

- Eat or drink only pasteurized (boiled or heated) dairy products. Most store-bought milk is pasteurized, but fresh farm products may not be. International travelers should take care not to eat or drink dairy products unless they know they are pasteurized.
- People who work with animals should take care to cover open wounds and wear gloves when handling animal carcasses or touching bodily fluids from an animal.
- People with decreased immune systems (such as people with HIV/AIDS, cancer, or organ transplants) should stay away from dogs that have been diagnosed with brucellosis.

Additional Information

- Consult the Ohio Administrative code for requirements on vaccinating and testing livestock in Ohio. Link: <http://codes.ohio.gov/oac/901%3A1-5>.

All information is general in nature and is not intended to be used as a substitute for appropriate professional advice.



c/o Franklin County Public Health, 280 East Broad Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215-4562

Call: (614) 525-8888 • After Hours: (614) 525-3965 • Fax: (614) 525-8890

Email: idsr@franklincountyohio.gov • Web: www.idrsinfo.org

