



PUBLIC FACT SHEET

TULAREMIA

What is tularemia?

Tularemia is a potentially serious disease associated with animals and humans. It occurs throughout the year, but primarily during the summer. Tularemia is most commonly found in animals such as rabbits, rodents, and squirrels.

How common is tularemia?

There are approximately 200 cases of tularemia reported each year in the United States. Most cases occur in the south-central and western states.

How is tularemia spread?

Ways that tularemia can be spread include:

- handling infected animals carcasses
- being bitten by an infected tick, deerfly, or other insect
- eating or drinking contaminated food
- breathing dust from contaminated soil

Tularemia is not known to be spread from person to person. It could, however, be made to be airborne and used as a weapon of bioterrorism.

What are the symptoms?

Common symptoms of tularemia may include:

- sudden chills and fever
- headache
- muscle pain and progressive weakness
- joint pain
- cough
- diarrhea
- skin ulcers
- swollen painful lymph glands

How is tularemia diagnosed?

Tularemia is diagnosed by specific blood or sputum tests.

How is tularemia treated?

Several effective antibiotics are available to treat tularemia.

How can tularemia be prevented?

To help prevent tularemia:

- use insect repellent containing DEET on your skin
- treat clothing with insect repellents containing permethrin
- use gloves and wash your hands often with soap and warm water when handling animal carcasses
- cook food thoroughly
- avoid drinking, bathing, swimming, or working in untreated water

Although a vaccine was used in the past to protect laboratory workers, there is currently no tularemia vaccine available.

For more information on tularemia contact:

Ottawa County Health Department
www.miOttawa.org

Center for Disease Control and Prevention
www.bt.cdc.gov/agent/tularemia/
Phone: (888) 246-2675