



Diseases Fact Sheet - Brucellosis

South Dakota Department of Health

Office of Disease Prevention Services - 605-773-3737 -(1-800-592-1861 in South Dakota only)

This material is provided for informational purposes only and is not a substitute for medical care. We are not able to answer personal medical questions. Please see your health care provider concerning appropriate care, treatment or other medical advice.

What is it?

Brucellosis is a bacterial disease of domestic and wild animals that may be transmitted to humans.

Who gets brucellosis?

Everyone is susceptible and may get the disease if exposed. It is more likely to be found in people associated with cattle, pigs, sheep and goats, or people who drink raw milk or unpasteurized dairy products.

How is brucellosis spread?

The bacteria causing the disease may be found in unpasteurized milk from diseased livestock and also in their blood, urine, tissues, vaginal discharges, placentas and aborted fetuses. It is unlikely that this disease would be spread from person to person.

What are the symptoms of brucellosis?

Human symptoms of brucellosis include irregular fever, headache, weakness, sweating, chills, weight loss, generalized aching and other nonspecific flu-like symptoms.

How soon do symptoms appear?

The time period is highly variable, but symptoms usually appear within 5 days to 5 months, commonly 1 to 2 months.

Does past infection with brucellosis make a person immune?

Long-term immunity is uncertain.

What is the treatment for brucellosis?

Brucellosis is treated with antibiotics. Early diagnosis leading to prompt antibiotic treatment is essential to prevent chronic infection.



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What can be done to prevent the spread of brucellosis?

Pasteurizing milk and limiting contact with infected cattle, sheep or goats will reduce the risk of infection.

Can brucella be a bioterrorism weapon?

Yes. Brucella is considered a Category B bioterrorism agent.

Related Sites:

- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)