



# BRUCELLOSIS



## BASIC INFORMATION

### DESCRIPTION

A rare infection passed to humans from infected cows, pigs, sheep, or goats. It cannot be passed from person to person. It affects the bone marrow, lymph glands, liver, and spleen. It is more common in men between ages 20 and 60. The infection may be acute (short-lasting) or chronic (persisting over months or years).

### FREQUENT SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- Sweating, chills, and fever (may come and go).
- Tiredness.
- Upset stomach.
- Tenderness along the spine.
- Headache.
- Muscle and joint aches.
- Constipation.
- Weight loss.
- Depression.
- In later stages of the infection, mental problems and seizures may occur.

### CAUSES

Infection from a bacterium, which is passed to humans by ingesting infected food products, direct contact with an infected animal or breathing in germs in the air. After a person is exposed, symptoms may develop in 1 to 8 weeks.

### RISK INCREASES WITH

- Persons who work with animals. This includes farmers, ranchers, meat processors, and veterinarians.
- Travel to some foreign countries.
- Biological warfare.

### PREVENTIVE MEASURES

- Don't drink milk from any source that has not been pasteurized.
- Protect yourself when working around animals. Use safety protection (gloves and mask) as needed.
- Farm animals should be immunized.

### EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Can usually be cured in 3 to 4 weeks with treatment. Some muscle aches may continue for a period of time.

## POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

- Endocarditis (heart inflammation).
- The infection may recur.



## DIAGNOSIS & TREATMENT

### GENERAL MEASURES

- Your health care provider will do a physical exam and ask questions about your symptoms and activities. Be sure to discuss any contact with animals you have had in the last few months. Medical tests may include studies of blood, urine, and spinal fluid. X-ray, CT, heart tests, and others may be done depending on the symptoms.
- Treatment usually consists of drugs for infection and getting extra rest. If symptoms are more severe, hospital care may be needed.
- It usually is not necessary to keep the ill person away from others.
- Avoid contact with animals that may be the source of the infection.
- Family members who may have been exposed to the same infected food products should see their health care provider.

### MEDICATIONS

- Antibiotic drugs will be prescribed for the infection. You usually need to take them for several weeks.
- Drugs to reduce swelling in severe cases and for relief of muscle pain may be prescribed.

### ACTIVITY

Get extra rest until fever and other symptoms improve. Return to your normal activities slowly.

### DIET

No special diet.



## NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IF

- You or a family member has symptoms of brucellosis.
- Fever or other symptoms return after treatment.
- New, unexplained symptoms develop. Drugs used in treatment may produce side effects.