

Tularemia



Tularemia is a very serious disease. It is caused by a bacteria sometimes found in rats, rabbits, and other wild animals.

How could I get tularemia?

You could get tularemia if you:

- Handle dead animals that are infected,
- Are bitten by an infected tick, deerfly or other insect,
- Eat or drink contaminated food or water, or
- Breathe the bacteria that cause tularemia.

Is tularemia dangerous?

Yes. You must get treated with special antibiotics **right away**, or you could die. With antibiotic treatment, you will probably survive.



What are the symptoms of tularemia?

The first symptoms usually start within 3–5 days:

- sudden fever, chills,
- swollen, painful glands,
- headache,
- diarrhea,
- muscle aches and joint pain,
- dry cough,
- weakness.

Other symptoms depend on how you got infected. You may have sores on your skin or mouth, a sore throat, swelling and pain in your eyes or in the glands in your neck, underarms or groin.

Later you may have pneumonia and shortness of breath, chest pain, and cough up bloody mucus. Some people stop breathing and die.

Is tularemia contagious?

No. You cannot get tularemia from another person.

Is there a vaccine?

No.

What if I think I have tularemia?

Call your doctor or hospital **right away**.



How can I prevent getting infected?

You can:

- Prevent insect bites,
 - Use insect repellent with DEET on your skin, and
 - Spray your clothes with a repellent that has permethrin.
- Wash your hands often with soap and warm water, especially after handling dead animals,
- Always cook your food thoroughly, and
- Make sure your water is from a safe source.

Call your veterinarian if your livestock or pets (especially rabbits, rats, and other rodents) develop unusual symptoms like fever, weight loss, swollen glands, sores, etc.

Can terrorists use tularemia as a weapon?

It is possible, but it would be very hard to release enough tularemia bacteria into the air.

For more information...

Call CDC for information in English or Spanish:

800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4636)

888-232-6348 (TTY)

Or visit: www.bt.cdc.gov/agent/tularemia
www.dhs.ca.gov/epo