

Brucellosis

Brucellosis is a bacterial disease that may affect various organs of the body.

It is caused by the bacterium *Brucella* and usually infects animals.

Humans can become infected by direct contact with infected animals or their milk.

How common is brucellosis?

Brucellosis is not very common in the United States. Only 100 to 200 cases occur each year. However, brucellosis can be very common in countries where animal disease control programs have not reduced the amount of disease among animals.

How is brucellosis spread?

The bacteria that causes brucellosis is found in unpasteurized milk from diseased cows and from discharges from cattle or goats that abort their fetus. Direct person to person transmission of the disease is very rare.

What are the symptoms of brucellosis?

In humans, brucellosis can cause a range of symptoms that are similar to the flu and may include fever, sweats, headaches, back pains, and physical weakness. Severe infections of the central nervous system or lining of the heart may occur. Brucellosis can also cause long-lasting or chronic symptoms that include recurrent fevers, joint pain, and fatigue.

How soon do symptoms appear?

The time period is highly variable but symptoms usually appear within five to 30 days.

What is the treatment for brucellosis?

Antibiotics can be used to treat brucellosis, but recovery may take a few weeks to several months.

What can be done to prevent the spread of brucellosis?

The use of pasteurized milk and prevention of contact with infected cattle, sheep or goats will reduce the risk of infection.

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