

# Q Fever

**Q fever is an infection caused by a bacterium (germ) that is generally found in infected animals (cows, ducks, turkeys).**

**If the germ were intentionally released into the air (bioterrorism), it would most likely be inhaled (breathed in) into your lungs causing an infection (pneumonia).**

## **Is Q fever spread from person to person?**

No. It is most often spread by contact with contaminated straw or manure. It can also be spread by inhaling contaminated dust or soil, ingesting raw milk or skinning wild rabbits.

## **How will I know if I have been exposed to Q fever?**

It will depend on how the germ was released, where it was released, and where you were in relation to the release site. The further away you were from the release site the less likely it will be that you were exposed.

## **How soon will symptoms develop (incubation period)?**

Symptoms may start in two to 14 days after you have been exposed.

## **What are the symptoms of Q fever?**

Symptoms may include fever, dry cough, severe headache, tiredness, chills, sweats, sore muscles, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and pain when taking a deep breath. Not all persons who are exposed will get sick.

## **How is Q fever treated?**

If you have symptoms of this infection, your health care provider will give you an antibiotic.

## **How is Q fever prevented?**

If the local health officer determines that you have been exposed, you will be offered an antibiotic. Even if you take the antibiotic, you may develop the infection. If any symptoms of infection develop while you are taking the antibiotic, you should see your health care provider immediately.

## **How long should I take the antibiotic?**

It is extremely important that you take the antibiotic exactly as directed. The dose and number of treatment days will differ depending on the antibiotic prescribed. If you develop side effects to the antibiotic, call your health care provider immediately. Do not give your antibiotic to another person.

## **What should I do if I DO NOT have symptoms?**

If you do not have symptoms of this infection you should continue your daily activities. DO NOT go to the hospital emergency room unless you are feeling sick.

**Kalamazoo County Public Health  
Emergency Information Line:  
269-373-5300**

**Kalamazoo County  
Health & Community Services**  
3299 Gull Road; PO Box 42  
Nazareth, MI 49074-0042  
Phone: 269-373-5200 Fax: 269-373-5363  
Web: [www.kalcounty.com](http://www.kalcounty.com)