

FACT SHEET

Tularemia

What is it?

Tularemia is an infectious disease caused by a hardy bacterium, *Francisella tularensis*, found in animals (especially rodents, rabbits, and hares).

Causes

People can get tularemia many different ways, such as through the bite of an infected insect or other arthropod (usually a tick or deerfly), handling infected animal carcasses, eating or drinking contaminated food or water, or breathing in *F. tularensis*.

Symptoms

Symptoms of tularemia could include sudden fever, chills, headaches, muscle aches, joint pain, dry cough, progressive weakness, and pneumonia. Persons with pneumonia can develop chest pain and bloody spit and can have trouble breathing or can sometimes stop breathing. Other symptoms of tularemia depend on how a person was exposed to the tularemia bacteria. These symptoms can include ulcers on the skin or mouth, swollen and painful lymph glands, swollen and painful eyes, and a sore throat. Symptoms usually appear 3 to 5 days after exposure to the bacteria, but can take as long as 14 days.

Transmission

Tularemia is not known to be spread from person to person, so people who have tularemia do not need to be isolated. People who have been exposed to *F. tularensis* should be treated as soon as possible.

Treatment

The disease can be fatal if it is not treated with the appropriate antibiotics.

Prevention

A vaccine for tularemia is under review by the Food and Drug Administration and is not currently available in the United States.

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