

PUBLIC HEALTH FACT SHEET

Tularemia

What is Tularemia?

Tularemia is a bacterial disease caused by a germ found in some rabbits, hares, muskrats, beavers, domestic animals and ticks. There are four types of Tularemia, which can infect skin, glands, eyes, blood or lungs.

Who can get Tularemia?

Anyone can be exposed to the germ through skin wounds, breathing the germ, or eating infected food.

What are the symptoms of Tularemia?

Symptoms of Tularemia can include sudden fever, chills, headaches, muscle aches, joint pain, dry cough, increasing weakness, and pneumonia. Persons with pneumonia can have chest pain, and bloody spit, and can have trouble breathing, or stop breathing. Other symptoms of Tularemia depend on how a person came in contact with the germ. These symptoms can include sores on the skin or mouth, swollen and painful glands, swollen and painful eyes, and/or a sore throat.

How do you get Tularemia?

Tularemia is not likely to be spread from person to person; therefore, there is no need to treat contacts of persons ill with Tularemia. Breathing in the dust from contaminated soil, grain, or hay can cause infection in the lungs. Eating improperly cooked meat from infected animals or drinking contaminated water spreads the disease. You can also get Tularemia through the bite of an infected tick, deerfly or other insect.

When will the first signs of illness appear?

Symptoms usually appear 3 to 5 days after coming in contact with the germ, but can take as long as 14 days.

Can Tularemia be treated?

People who have come in contact with the germ should be treated as soon as possible. The disease can be fatal if it is not treated with antibiotics.

Can Tularemia be prevented?

Persons who have come in contact with a Tularemia source can be protected from the disease with antibiotic treatment (such as Ciprofloxacin, Doxycycline, and Tetracycline).

For more information on Tularemia, call (248) 858-1406 or toll free 1 (800) 848-5533.