



PUBLIC FACT SHEET

Q FEVER

What is Q Fever?

Q Fever is an infectious disease that spreads from animals to humans. It is caused by bacteria that primarily lives in cattle, sheep, goats, and has been seen in other breeds of livestock and domesticated pets.

The infected animals are not necessarily sick. Instead, they excrete the bacteria in their milk, urine, feces, and amniotic fluid. Q Fever is resistant to heat, drying, and many common disinfections.

How common is Q Fever?

Humans are very susceptible to Q Fever because it is so common, although it is rarely reported because of the mildness of many cases.

How is Q Fever spread?

Q Fever may be spread through the following ways:

- inhalation of bacteria from barnyard dust that contains infected birth materials
 - may be carried down wind for one-half mile or more
- drinking of infected milk
- vomiting and inspiration of the contaminated foods (less common)

Person to person spread of brucellosis rarely occurs, if ever.

What are possible symptoms?

People can have Q Fever without knowing it or they may mistake it for the flu. Others develop symptoms quite suddenly. The incubation period for the Q Fever bacteria is between 14 and 21 days.

General symptoms may include:

- high fever
- chills and sweating
- head and muscle aches
- sore throat
- loss of appetite
- cough
- nausea and vomiting
- diarrhea
- abdominal pain
- chest pain

Some people may develop pneumonia or hepatitis. The majority will have abnormal liver functions.

How is Q Fever diagnosed?

Q Fever is detected through a blood test.

How is Q Fever treated?

Antibiotics are often used to treat Q Fever and people usually recover quickly. People who do not seek treatment usually recover within several months.

For more information on Q Fever contact:

Ottawa County Health Department
www.miOttawa.org

Center for Disease Control and Prevention
www.bt.cdc.gov/agent/Ofever/
Phone: (888) 246-2675