

TULAREMIA

TULAREMIA IN ANIMALS

Q. WHAT IS TULAREMIA?

A. Tularemia is a disease caused by infection with the bacteria *Francisella tularensis*.

Q. CAN ANIMALS GET TULAREMIA?

A. Yes. Tularemia infections have been documented in more than 100 species of wild and domestic animals, including rodents, dogs, cats, pigs, horses, sheep, birds, reptiles and even fish. Among livestock, sheep appear to be especially susceptible to developing clinical disease. Cats, dogs, and cattle appear to be more resistant to infection than many other species.

Q. HOW CAN I TELL IF MY PET OR ANIMALS MIGHT BE INFECTED?

A. Many of the clinical signs associated with TULAREMIA infection in animals are not well known. The most common symptoms are non-specific and include fever, lethargy, loss of appetite, swollen lymph nodes, increased pulse and respiration, coughing and diarrhea. Sudden death may occur in some species without noticeable symptoms of illness.

Q. HOW DO ANIMALS GET TULAREMIA?

A. TULAREMIA is most commonly transmitted to animals by ticks but can be transmitted by other biting arthropods, such as deerflies, horseflies, mosquitoes, fleas and lice. TULAREMIA also can be transmitted through the ingestion of contaminated water or animal tissues and breathing in the infectious particles in the air.

Q. IS THERE A TULAREMIA VACCINE FOR ANIMALS?

A. No.

Q. WHAT IS THE TREATMENT FOR TULAREMIA IN ANIMALS?

A. Animals can be treated with antibiotics. If your animal is sick or has been exposed to the TULAREMIA bacteria, contact your veterinarian. **Do NOT give animals your medication.**

Q. CAN ANIMALS WITH TULAREMIA TRANSMIT DISEASE TO OTHER ANIMALS OR PEOPLE?

A. Yes. Common modes of transmission between animals or between animals and humans include direct contact with infected animals or their tissues or fluids, bites from infected arthropods, or aerosol exposure to bacteria through coughing or sneezing.

Q. WHAT CAN I DO TO PROTECT MY ANIMALS AND MYSELF?

A. There are a number of things you can do:

- If your pet or animals have been exposed or are sick, call your veterinarian.
- Do not allow your pets to have contact with wild animals or their carcasses.

- Control fleas, ticks, biting flies and mosquitoes on pets and in and around your home.
- If you have to remove a dead rodent or other animal, thoroughly saturate its body with an insecticide prior to handling in order to kill fleas. Do not handle the carcass with bare hands. Wear disposable gloves or use a shovel or other indirect means to handle the carcass.
- Disinfect areas in contact with infected animals using a mixture of one (1) part household bleach in nine (9) parts water. Apply to all surfaces and wash off with water after waiting at least 30 minutes.

Q. IF MY ANIMAL DIES FROM TULAREMIA, WHAT SHOULD I DO?

A. Before handling, thoroughly saturate the body with an insecticide to kill fleas. Burn the carcass or bury it deeply to prevent scavenging by wildlife and other animals. You may want to contact your veterinarian or local animal control to arrange for safe disposal. Contact the Texas Animal Health Commission and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality for guidance on complying with environmental laws regulating the disposal of animal carcasses.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT TULAREMIA CONTACT:

- **Texas Department of State Health Services Zoonosis Control**
512-458-7255
- **DSHS Zoonosis Control** Web site: www.dshs.state.tx.us/idcu/health/zoonosis/
- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Public Response Hotline:**
800-CDC-INFO
(800-232-4636)
888-232-6348 (TTY)
cdcinfo@cdc.gov (e-mail)
- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** Web site: www.cdc.gov
- **Texas Animal Health Commission** Web site: www.tahc.state.tx.us