



Indiana State Department of Health

Epidemiology Resource Center

Quick Facts

About...Brucellosis

What is brucellosis?

Brucellosis is a disease caused by a bacterium. These bacteria are passed among animals, like sheep, goats, cattle, deer, elk, pigs, and dogs. Brucellosis is not common in the United States, in people or animals, but is very common in other parts of the world.

How is brucellosis spread?

Humans may get the disease by 1 of 3 ways

- Eating or drinking raw milk products with the bacteria;
- Breathing in the bacteria in a high risk job; or
- Having skin contact with animals or animal products that have the bacteria.

How do I know if I have brucellosis?

See a doctor. Be sure to inform your doctor if you have drank unpasteurized (raw) milk or have been around livestock. Your doctor will give you a physical exam and may order lab tests.

What are the symptoms of brucellosis in humans?

In humans, brucellosis can cause a range of symptoms that are similar to the flu and may include fever, sweats, headaches, back pains, and physical weakness. Severe infections of the central nervous system or lining of the heart may occur. Brucellosis can also cause long-lasting or chronic symptoms that include recurrent fevers, joint pain, and fatigue.

How is brucellosis treated?

Antibiotics from a doctor are used to treat brucellosis.

How is brucellosis prevented?

Do not drink raw milk, or eat cheese or ice cream made from raw milk while traveling. If you are not sure that the dairy product is pasteurized, don't eat or drink it. Hunters and animal herdsman should use rubber gloves when handling the insides of animals. There is no vaccine for humans.

All information presented is intended for public use. For more information, please refer to: <http://www.cdc.gov/nczved/divisions/dfbmd/diseases/brucellosis/>

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