



TULAREMIA FACT SHEET

WHAT IS TULAREMIA?

Tularemia is a disease of animals and humans caused by bacteria. Rabbits, hares, and rodents are especially susceptible and often die in large numbers during outbreaks. In the United States, naturally occurring infections have been reported from all states except Hawaii.

HOW DO YOU GET TULAREMIA?

Humans can become infected by:

- Tick and deer fly bites
- Skin contact with infected animals
- Ingestion of contaminated water
- Inhalation of contaminated aerosols or agricultural dusts
- Laboratory exposure
- Or as a result of bioterrorism

SYMPTOMS

Symptoms vary depending on the how you were infected. Symptoms may include:

- Skin ulcer following a tick or deer fly bite.
- Swollen lymph glands, usually in the armpit or groin.
- If bacteria enter the eye, irritation and inflammation of the eye and swelling of the lymph glands in front of the ear.
- If drank contaminated water, you may experience sore throat, mouth ulcers, tonsillitis, and swelling of the lymph glands in the neck.
- If tularemia is breathed in, you may experience cough, chest pain, and difficulty breathing.

TREATMENT

Although tularemia can be life-threatening, most infections can be treated successfully with antibiotics. Discuss treatment options with your doctor.

PREVENTION

- Avoid tick and deer fly bites by wearing insect repellent.
- Wear gloves when handling sick or dead animals.
- Avoid mowing over dead animals.
- Cook game meat thoroughly before eating.

DGHD EFFORTS

Reports of suspected and confirmed cases of disease are made to the Delaware General Health District (DGHD). The DGHD investigates potential sources of illness, conducts surveillance for the spread of disease, and engages in community outreach and education.