

TULAREMIA

Tularemia is a bacterial disease associated with both animals and man caused by the bacteria *Francisella tularensis*. Although many wild animals are infected (rabbits, squirrels, muskrats, beavers, deer), occasionally certain domestic animals - (sheep and cats) can be infected.

TRANSMISSION

Tularemia is transmitted through the bites of ticks; by handling or ingesting insufficiently cooked meat of infected animal hosts; by drinking contaminated water; and by inhalation of dust from contaminated soil, grain, or hay.

SYMPTOMS

The incubation period for tularemia ranges from 1 to 14 days, usually 3 to 5 days. Tularemia is usually recognized by the presence of a skin lesion and swollen glands. Ingestion of the organism may produce a throat infection, intestinal pain, diarrhea, and vomiting. Inhalation of the organism may produce a fever alone or combined with a pneumonia-like illness.

WHO IS AT RISK?

Hunters, trappers, or other people who spend a great deal of time outdoors are at greater risk of exposure to tularemia than people with other occupational or recreational interests. There is no direct transmission from person to person.

TREATMENT

Certain antibiotics such as streptomycin are effective in treating tularemia. Others such as gentamicin and tobramycin have also been reported to be effective.

PREVENTION

Rubber gloves should be worn when skinning or handling animals, especially rabbits. Wild rabbit and rodent meat should be cooked thoroughly before eating. Avoid bites of deer flies and ticks and avoid drinking, bathing, swimming, or working in untreated water. Instruct children not to handle any sick or dead animals