

Canine brucellosis (*Brucella canis*)

Information for dog owners



About *Brucella canis*

Canine brucellosis is a disease caused by the bacteria *Brucella canis*. Most infected dogs show few or no signs of illness but can still spread the bacteria. Although human infections are uncommon, people can become infected through contact with contaminated body fluids or materials from an infected dog.

How people become exposed

B. canis spreads through contact with infected body fluids. The bacteria is most commonly found in birthing fluids and vaginal discharge, followed by semen, urine, saliva, and blood. Transmission most commonly occurs during breeding, pregnancy, birth, or contact with other contaminated materials.

People can become infected if these fluids enter the eyes, mouth, or open cuts. The risk for most pet owners is low. People at highest risk include dog breeders, veterinarians and veterinary staff, and shelter or kennel workers.

Symptoms and treatment

Symptoms in people may include fever, fatigue, headache, muscle or joint pain, swollen lymph nodes, and night sweats. Because these symptoms are not specific and testing options are limited, diagnosis can take time. In some cases, the infection can become localized and cause severe illness. Infection is typically treated with antibiotics prescribed by a healthcare provider. Early diagnosis and treatment can help reduce the risk of complications, although the infection may persist despite treatment. Contact a healthcare provider if you develop symptoms following an exposure.

Reducing your risk

For most dog owners

- The risk of *B. canis* infection for most pet owners is low.

For breeders, kennel workers, and veterinary staff

- Avoid contact with birthing fluids, vaginal discharge, semen, urine, saliva, and blood from infected dogs.
- Wear gloves when handling potentially infectious materials or cleaning contaminated areas.
- Wash your hands thoroughly after handling dogs or materials that may be contaminated.

If your dog has *B. canis*

- Households with a dog diagnosed with *B. canis* should avoid sleeping with the dog and limit direct contact with the dog's body fluids. People with weakened immune systems should take extra precautions.
- Spaying or neutering an infected dog can help reduce the risk of spreading the infection.

Animal health information

For more information about *B. canis* in dogs and how to manage it, scan the QR code or visit the Utah State Veterinarian's Office web page about *B. canis*.
<https://ag.utah.gov/animal-industry/animal-health-program/pets/brucella-canis/>



Department of Health
& Human Services

<https://epi.utah.gov/brucellosis/>

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