

# Brucellosis

## Occupational Bacterial Infection from Handling Livestock, Horses, and Dogs

### What is Brucellosis?

Brucellosis, also known as undulant fever or Malta fever, is a highly infectious bacterial disease caused by the bacterium *Brucella* spp. It is found worldwide and affects livestock, horses, dogs, and humans.

### How does infection occur?

*Brucella* infection can be transmitted by ingesting unpasteurized milk or milk products or undercooked meat from infected animals. The main route of transmission is direct contact with or breathing in birth fluids from an infected animal. Contact with saliva, nasal discharges, or feces is another means of transmission.

### What are the symptoms?

Symptoms in humans can be asymptomatic or flu like symptoms such as fever, headache, chills, and joint pain. Other symptoms of vomiting, diarrhea, and constipation have also been reported. Occasionally, this disease may cause abortions in humans.

### How do I prevent it?

When working with animals, wash hands frequently. Wear appropriate PPE such as a mask, gown, gloves, and eye protection when handling sick animals or animals giving birth as products of parturition and animal secretions are primary sources of infection. Only consume pasteurized milk products and properly cooked meats.

### How is it treated?

Brucellosis can be treated with antibiotics.

### Resources used:

- The Center for Food Security and Public Health Zoonotic Disease Factsheets: Brucellosis
- The Center for Food Security and Public Health Zoonotic Transmission Routes: Brucellosis
- Agriculture Guide 3rd Edition (2010)
- List of Zoonoses - Special Pet Topics – (2016) *Merck Veterinary Manual* 11<sup>th</sup> ed.
- Chapter 28, Selected Zoonoses, (2015) *Lab Animal Medicine*, 3rd ed.