

Tularemia

What is Tularemia?

Tularemia is a rare bacterial disease caused by the bacterium *Franciscella tularensis*. Numerous wild animals, especially rabbits, hares, voles, muskrats, beavers, and some domestic animals act as the host for the bacteria. The disease is then transmitted to humans through the bite of certain ticks and deer flies, or by contact of the skin with contaminated water, blood or tissue while handling carcasses of infected animals.

What are the symptoms of Tularemia?

There are a variety of symptoms that can be related to tularemia. The skin, lymph nodes, lungs and blood may be affected. The most frequent symptom is an ulcer at the site the bacteria entered, together with swelling of the local lymph nodes.

The incubation period is usually 3 to 5 days and ranges from 1 to 14 days.

How is Tularemia diagnosed?

Diagnosis is usually made by a physician, and is supported by evidence or history of a tick or deerfly bite, exposure to tissues of an infected animal, or exposure to potentially contaminated water. Diagnosis is confirmed by a blood test.

This fact sheet provides basic information only. It must not take the place of medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Always talk to a health care professional about any health concerns.

Source: Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, Public Health Division.

For further information contact the Infectious Disease Program at 625-8318
or toll free 1-888-294-6630, ext. 8318.

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