

Brucella canis

What is *Brucella canis*?

Brucella canis (*B. canis*) is a bacterium that causes a disease called brucellosis, mainly in dogs. People who have contact with infected animals may become infected with the *Brucella* germ. Brucellosis is rare in New Hampshire.

How do humans get *B. canis*?

People can become infected with *Brucella canis* through a break in the skin that comes in contact with infected animals, especially their blood or when they are giving birth or other genital secretions.

Can *B. canis* be spread from person to person?

It appears to be unlikely.

What are the symptoms of brucellosis?

Brucellosis symptoms are similar to the flu including fever, chills, sweats, headaches, muscle aches, joint pains, back pain, and weakness. Very rare but serious complications are meningitis and heart valve infection. Brucellosis can also lead to long-lasting symptoms that include recurrent fevers, joint pain, and fatigue.

How soon after exposure do symptoms appear?

Symptoms of brucellosis can appear from 5 days to 2 months after exposure to the germ, but most people start to show symptoms about 3 to 4 weeks after exposure.

How is *B. canis* diagnosed in dogs?

The diagnosis of *B. canis* is made by finding the germ in laboratory samples taken from a dog's blood, bone marrow, and other tissues.

Can *B. canis* be diagnosed in humans?

Yes, usually by a blood test.

How is brucellosis treated in humans?

B. canis in humans is treated by taking antibiotics for up to 6 weeks.

How is *B. canis* treated in animals?

Infected animals may need to be euthanized. They can also be neutered and given long-term antibiotics then tested again; however, even with this aggressive management, sometimes the dog is not cured.

What should I do with the dog(s) that I purchased from a kennel with confirmed *B. canis*?

You should discuss this exposure with your veterinarian.

Is there a vaccine for brucellosis?

There is no vaccine against *B. canis* for people or for dogs; there is a vaccine for cattle, however.

How can I prevent brucellosis?

Clean the kennel area regularly wearing gloves and eye protection when cleaning, especially when in contact with urine, stool, or fluids following birth or loss of pups.

For more information about brucellosis in humans, contact the NH Department of Health and Human Services, Disease Investigation Section at 1-800-852-3345 x4496 or 603-271-4496 or visit www.dhhs.nh.gov or the Centers for Disease Control Prevention website at www.cdc.gov. For information about brucellosis in animals, contact the NH Department of Agriculture, Markets, and Food at 603-271-2404.