



BABESIOSIS FACT SHEET

WHAT IS BABESIOSIS??

Babesiosis is caused by microscopic parasites that infect red blood cells and are spread by certain ticks. In the United States, tickborne transmission is most common in particular regions and seasons: it mainly occurs in parts of the Northeast and upper Midwest and usually peaks during the warm months.

HOW DO YOU GET BABESIOSIS?

- Through the bite of an infected tick
- Less commonly, you can get infected by getting a blood transfusion from an infected blood donor
- Cases of congenital transmission (from an infected mother to her baby) are rare but have been reported.

SYMPTOMS

Many people with Babesiosis do not have any symptoms. Some people develop nonspecific flu-like symptoms such as fever, chills, sweats, headache, body aches, loss of appetite, nausea, or fatigue. Symptoms typically occur 1 to 4 weeks or longer after being infected by a tick. Because Babesia parasites infect and destroy red blood cells, babesiosis can cause a special type of anemia called hemolytic anemia. This type of anemia can lead to jaundice (yellowing of the skin) and dark urine.

TREATMENT

Effective treatments are available. People who do not have any symptoms or signs of babesiosis usually do not need to be treated. Discuss treatment options with your doctor.

PREVENTION

During outdoor activities in tick habitats:

- Walk on cleared trails
- Wear long pants and a long-sleeved shirt to minimize the amount of exposed skin
- Wear light colored clothing to make it easier to see and remove ticks

TREAT clothing or skin with repellents.

INSPECT yourself, clothing and gear for ticks.

CLEAN & disinfect any area where a tick was removed.

KEEP record of the date the tick was removed.

SHOWER as soon as possible after coming indoors.

DPHD EFFORTS:

Reports of suspected and confirmed cases of disease are made to the Delaware Public Health District (DPHD). The DPHD investigates potential sources of illness, conducts surveillance for the spread of disease, and engages in community outreach and education.