



EHRlichiosis FACT SHEET

WHAT IS EHRlichiosis?

Ehrlichiosis is the general name used to describe diseases caused by the bacteria *Ehrlichia chaffeensis*, *E. ewingii*, or *E. muris euclairensis* in the United States. The majority of reported cases are due to infection with *E. chaffeensis*.

HOW DO YOU GET EHRlichiosis?

Most people get ehrlichiosis from the bite of an infected tick. In the United States, *E. chaffeensis* and *E. ewingii* are carried by the lone star tick found primarily in the south-central and eastern United States. *E. muris euclairensis* is carried by the blacklegged tick. While the blacklegged tick is widely distributed in the eastern United States, *E. muris euclairensis* has only been found in Wisconsin and Minnesota. In rare cases, *Ehrlichia* species have been spread through blood transfusion and organ transplant.

SYMPTOMS

Symptoms of ehrlichiosis typically begin within 1-2 weeks after the bite of an infected tick. Early signs and symptoms (the first 5 days of illness) are usually mild or moderate and may include:

- Fever, chills
- Severe headache
- Muscle aches
- Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, loss of appetite
- Confusion
- Rash (more common in children)

Up to 1 in 3 people with Ehrlichiosis report a rash; rash is more common in people with *E. chaffeensis* Ehrlichiosis. Rash usually develops 5 days after fever begins. If a person develops a rash, it can look like red splotches or pinpoint dots

TREATMENT

If antibiotic treatment is delayed, Ehrlichiosis can sometimes cause severe illness. Early treatment can reduce your risk of developing severe illness. Discuss treatment options with your healthcare provider.

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.