

Q Fever

Agent: *Coxiella burnetii* (bacteria)

Mode of Transmission: Inhalation of air contaminated with dried placental material, birth fluids, or excreta of infected animals; direct exposure to infected animals or tissues; exposure to contaminated material, such as wool, straw, fertilizer, or laundry.

Signs/Symptoms: High fever, severe headache, malaise, muscle aches, confusion, non-productive cough, nausea, diarrhea, abdominal pain, and/or chest pain.

Prevention: Appropriate disposal of potentially infectious tissues and proper hygiene when handling animal birth material.

Other Important Information: Q fever is classified by the CDC as a potential bioterrorism agent because it could easily be disseminated and result in a moderate amount of illness.

Two cases of Q fever were reported in Virginia in 2008. Both cases occurred in adult white females. One case was associated with exposure to the still-birth of a calf prior to onset of symptoms. The other case had no obvious exposure. The five year average of reported cases in Virginia is 2.0 cases per year.