

## Glanders

### What is glanders?

Glanders is a disease caused by bacteria called *Burkholderia mallei*. The disease mainly affects horses, donkeys and mules. Glanders may spread from infected animals to humans.

### Who gets glanders?

No naturally occurring cases of glanders have been reported in the United States since the 1940s; however, the disease still occurs in other parts of the world such as Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Central and South America. People who get glanders usually have worked with animals that have the disease.

### How is glanders spread?

No cases of person-to-person transmission have been reported in the U.S. People who get the disease usually have had close contact with an infected animal. The bacteria usually enter the body through breaks in the skin or through the eyes, nose or mouth.

### What are the symptoms of glanders?

The bacteria can infect the skin or lungs or can spread throughout the body. Symptoms of skin infection include rashes, bumps under the skin, or open, draining wounds. Symptoms of lung infection include cough, fever, shortness of breath, or lung abscesses. When the bacteria get into the blood, symptoms include fever, chills, muscle aches, chest pain, skin rash, diarrhea or enlargement of the liver and/or spleen. Some people have symptoms that come and go over a long period of time.

### How soon after exposure do symptoms appear?

Symptoms usually appear within 1 to 14 days after exposure.

### How is glanders diagnosed?

Glanders is diagnosed through special laboratory tests. Depending on the type of glanders, samples may be taken from different parts of the body.

### What is the treatment for glanders?

Glanders is treated with antibiotics. Healthcare providers choose the antibiotic based on the patient's symptoms and the results of laboratory tests.

### How can glanders be prevented?

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There is no vaccine for glanders. In countries where glanders is common in animals, prevention of the disease in humans involves identifying and eliminating the infection in animals.

### **Could glanders be used for bioterrorism?**

Yes. The glanders bacteria are considered possible bioterrorism agents because they can be made into aerosols that are easy to spread and, if breathed in, could cause severe disease.

### **How can I get more information about glanders?**

- 1) If you have concerns about glanders, contact your healthcare provider.
- 2) Call your local health department. A directory of local health departments is located at <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/LHD/index.htm>.
- 3) Visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at <http://www.cdc.gov/glanders/>.