

Brucellosis

Agent: *Brucella* species (bacteria)

Mode of Transmission: Through contamination of skin wounds with infected animal tissue or body fluids; ingestion of unpasteurized milk or milk products; and inhalation of the organism.

Signs/Symptoms: Intermittent or irregular fever, headache, chills, sweating, and muscle pain.

Prevention: Rubber gloves should be used when handling animal tissue. Unpasteurized dairy products, especially milk, cheese, or ice cream, should not be consumed.

Other Important Information: Primarily an occupational disease of those working with infected animals, especially farm workers, veterinarians, and abattoir workers. Listed by the CDC as a potential bioterrorism agent because the organism may be relatively easily disseminated, may cause moderate injury or death, and may need enhanced surveillance for detection.

Five cases of brucellosis were reported in 2009 compared with no cases between 2006 and 2008. In those cases where a species was identified, *B. melitensis* was detected in two cases and *B. abortus* was detected in a third case. *B. melitensis* is usually acquired from goats while *B. abortus* is usually acquired from cows. However, both are commonly transmitted to humans through unpasteurized milk or milk products that come from outside the United States. Four of the cases reported possible exposure to a cheese product imported from Central America. A definitive exposure was not provided for the remaining case.

Two of the infections occurred in persons aged 20-29 years and the remaining three infections occurred in persons aged 30-39 years. Four of the five cases occurred in females. Four cases were reported from the eastern region, and the remaining case was reported from the central region.