

## **Brucellosis**

Agent: *Brucella* species (bacteria)

Mode of Transmission: Through ingestion of unpasteurized milk or milk products most commonly, but also may be transmitted by contamination of skin wounds with infected animal tissue or body fluids and by inhalation of the organism.

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

Prevention: Unpasteurized dairy products, especially milk, cheese, or ice cream, should not be consumed. Barrier precautions, such as wearing rubber gloves, should be used when handling animal tissue. Laboratory workers should take proper infection control precautions when handling samples known to contain or suspected of containing *Brucella*.

Other Important Information: Considered an occupational disease of those working with infected animals, especially farm workers, veterinarians, and abattoir workers. *Brucella* is 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.

No cases of brucellosis were reported in 2012. The only cases of brucellosis reported in Virginia in the past five years were five cases diagnosed in 2009. Of these, four persons reported consuming a cheese product imported from Mexico. A definitive exposure was not provided for the remaining case. The five-year average for brucellosis is 1.0 case per year.