

What are Zoonotic Diseases?



A zoonotic disease is a disease that can be passed between animals and humans. Zoonotic diseases can be caused by viruses, bacteria, parasites, and fungi. These diseases are very common. Scientists estimate that more than 6 out of every 10 infectious diseases in humans are spread from animals.

Many people interact with animals in their daily lives. We raise animals for food and keep them in our homes as pets. We might come into close contact with animals at a county fair or petting zoo or encounter wildlife when we clear wooded land for new construction.

How are they Spread?

People can get zoonotic diseases from contact with infected live poultry, rodents, reptiles, amphibians, insects, and other domestic and wild animals. A common way for these diseases to spread is through the bite of a mosquito or ticks. People can get diseases in most places where they might have contact with infected animals and insects, including:

- § Animal displays
- § Petting zoos
- § Pet stores
- § Nature parks
- § Wooded and bushy areas
- § Farms
- § County or state fairs
- § Child-care facilities or schools

Prevention

Luckily, there are many ways you can protect yourself and your family from zoonotic diseases. You can:

- § Be aware of zoonotic diseases and your potential for infection
- § Wash hands thoroughly and frequently
- § Avoid direct contact with certain animals and their environment
- § Closely supervise children to ensure they wash their hands properly and avoid hand-to-mouth activities (thumb-sucking, eating, and use of pacifiers) after animal contact
- § Use EPA-registered insect repellents that contain 20% or more DEET (N, N-diethyl-m-toluamide) on the exposed skin for protection that lasts up to several hours
- § Use products that contain repellents (such as permethrin) on clothing. Treat clothing and gear, such as boots, pants, socks and tents
- § Look for and remove ticks from your body. Parents should check their children for ticks
- § Limit the number of places around your home for mosquitoes to breed by getting rid of items that hold water



Interesting Facts About Zoonotic Diseases

- § About 75% of recently emerging infectious diseases affecting humans are diseases of animal origin, and approximately 60% of all human pathogens are zoonotic.
- § Tick-borne diseases, including Lyme Disease and Rocky Mountain spotted fever, are serious public health problems, infecting tens of thousands in the United States each year. CDC is working closely with local communities, developing innovative control approaches and researching improved diagnostics.
- § Almost all persons infected by rabid animals will die if not treated appropriately. Dogs are responsible for most human rabies deaths worldwide, but the public health threat of canine rabies has been virtually eliminated in the United States.
- § There have been 1.5 million West Nile virus infections since 1999. 2.5 billion people are at risk for dengue in more than 100 endemic countries with 50 million cases of dengue fever each year.



For more sources of information on this topic visit:

ST. CLAIR COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT www.scchealth.co

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES www.michigan.gov/mdhhs

CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION www.cdc.gov