

# What are the symptoms of BRUCELOSIS

Brucellosis has an incubation period of 5 to 60 days.

Symptoms include:

**Fever**

**Sweats**

**Headaches**

**Back pain**

**Physical weakness**

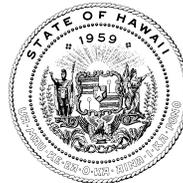
Severe infections of the central nervous system or lining of the heart may occur. Brucellosis can also cause long-lasting or chronic symptoms that include recurrent fevers, joint pain, and fatigue.

For more information, call

**Aloha United Way**

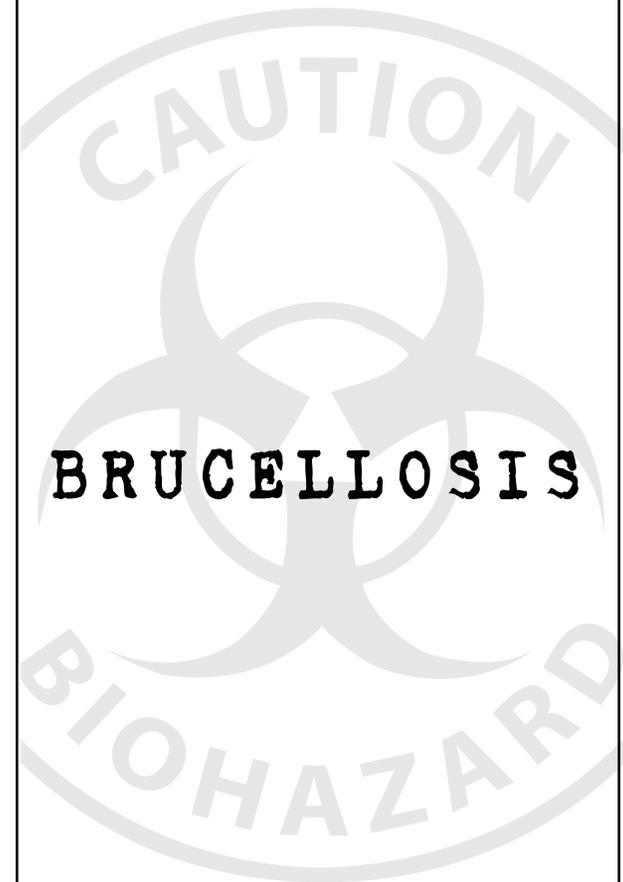


[www.hawaii.gov/doh](http://www.hawaii.gov/doh)  
or  
[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)



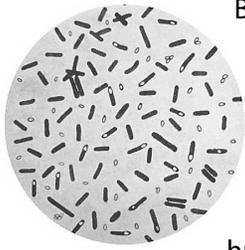
The Department of Health provides access to its programs and activities without regard to race, color, national origin (including language), age, sex, religion, or disability.

Write or call our Affirmative Action Officer at Box 3378, Honolulu, HI 96801-3378 or at (808) 586-4616 (voice) within 180 days of a problem.



Hawaii State Department of Health  
[www.hawaii.gov/doh](http://www.hawaii.gov/doh)  
For more information or referral  
Call 2-1-1

## What is brucellosis?



Brucellosis is an infectious disease caused by *Brucella* bacteria. These bacteria are primarily passed among animals, including livestock, wild game and even dogs. It can also affect humans.

## What are the symptoms of brucellosis?

Brucellosis has an incubation period of 5 to 60 days.

Symptoms include:

- Fever
- Sweats
- Headaches
- Back pain
- Physical weakness



Severe infections of the central nervous system or lining of the heart may occur. Brucellosis can also cause long-lasting or chronic symptoms that include recurrent fevers, joint pain, and fatigue.

## Why is there concern about brucellosis being used as a bioweapon?

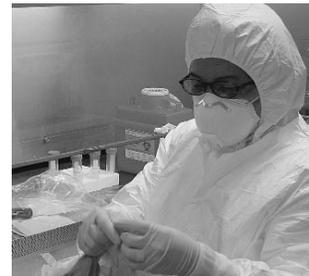
Brucellosis is found in many parts of the world and is easily transmitted by aerosol. Its potential as an airborne biological weapon was demonstrated in the mid-1940s when the U.S. conducted testing of bombs containing *Brucella* bacteria on animal targets.

## How is naturally occurring brucellosis spread?

In addition to the potential for brucellosis to be used as a bioweapon, it also occurs naturally and can be transmitted accidentally. Humans can become infected by coming in contact with animals or animal products that are contaminated with the *Brucella* bacteria. This generally occurs in one of three ways: eating or drinking something that is contaminated with *Brucella*, breathing in the organism (inhalation), or having the bacteria enter the body through skin wounds.



The most common way humans become infected is by eating or drinking contaminated milk



products. When sheep, goats, cows, or camels are infected, their milk is contaminated with the bacteria. If the milk is not pasteurized, these bacteria can be transmitted to persons who consume the milk products.

Inhalation of *Brucella* organisms is not a common route of infection, but it can be a significant hazard for people in certain occupations, such as those working in laboratories where the organism is cultured.

Contamination of skin wounds may be a problem for persons working in slaughterhouses or meat packing plants or for veterinarians. Hunters may be infected through skin wounds or by accidentally ingesting the bacteria after cleaning infected animals.

## How is brucellosis treated?

Blood tests can determine if a patient has brucellosis. Doctors can prescribe effective antibiotics to treat the disease. Depending on the timing of treatment and severity of illness, recovery may take a few weeks to several months.



## What should you do if you were exposed to brucellosis?

Seek prompt medical attention. Tell your care provider of the possible exposure. Brucellosis is generally not fatal.

Antibiotic treatment can lessen the severity of the disease.

## How common is brucellosis and where is it found?

Brucellosis is not very common in the United States, where 100 to 200 cases occur each year. But brucellosis can be very common in countries where animal disease control programs have not been prioritized or effective. Areas currently listed as high risk are the Mediterranean Basin, South and Central America, Eastern Europe, Asia, Africa, the Caribbean, and the Middle East.

## Can my pets get brucellosis?

Yes, dogs can contract and transmit brucellosis. If you think your pet has been infected call your veterinarian. People with immune system deficiencies should not handle dogs known to be infected with brucellosis.

