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TULAREMIA WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

What is Tularemia?

Tularemia, also known as Rabbit or Deerfly fever can affect both animals and humans. It is found naturally and, can remain alive for weeks in water and soil. It is highly infectious, and a very small number of bacteria can cause the disease.

How Common is Tularemia and What are the Symptoms?

Tularemia is rare; there are three forms of the disease. Symptoms appear within one to 14 days, but usually within two to four days. Patients have sudden fever, chills, nausea, and vomiting. Symptoms depend on how the infection is acquired:

- **Wound:** contracted through the skin creates a sore within a day or two, and usually appears at the site where the bacteria entered the body. This sore enlarges, becomes pus-filled and ulcerates, and is usually accompanied by swelling of the lymph nodes closest to the site of the sore.
- **Food-borne:** occurs when the bacteria is swallowed, and may cause throat infection, stomach pain, diarrhea, and vomiting.
- **Inhalation:** may produce fever and pneumonia-like illness.

How is Tularemia Diagnosed?

Diagnosis is made by culturing the bacteria from an ulcer, lymph node, or sputum.

Can Tularemia be Used as a Weapon?

Yes. Terrorists with the equipment and skills necessary to grow the cultures could use it as a weapon. If used as a weapon, it is anticipated that the bacteria would be delivered in an aerosol, making entry through the lungs the most likely route, although ingestion and entry through skin wounds would also be possible.

Tularemia Fact Sheet

RCP-P06-00m – Information from the CDC website and will need to be reviewed prior to dissemination to ensure accuracy.

Is There a Treatment?

Yes. Antibiotics are effective whether or not symptoms have appeared. The fatality rate is about 5-15 percent if untreated.

Is There a way to Prevent Infection?

The cleaning of contaminated articles may be accomplished using a solution of one tablespoon of household bleach per gallon of water. Those working with possibly contagious materials should wear facemasks, gowns, and rubber gloves. Avoid drinking, bathing, swimming, or working in water that may be contaminated. Tularemia can also be transmitted by the bite of infected flies, mosquitoes, and ticks at locations where tularemia is reported. Take measures to reduce contact with these insects.

Can Tularemia be Spread Person –to-Person?

Person to person spread of the disease is rare; those infected do not need to be isolated. However, where skin ulcers are apparent, these areas should be treated as contagious.

For more information on Tularemia, please visit the Center's for Disease Control website at www.cdc.gov