



Q Fever & Your Health

The bacteria that cause Q Fever, *Coxiella burnetii*, are found naturally throughout the United States, including Iowa. Sheep, goats, cattle, and other wild and domestic animals can be infected with Q Fever. Stillbirth and abortions are the most commonly reported symptoms in animals. Fewer than 200 human cases are reported each year in the U.S.



Remember to wear eye protection, face mask, and gloves when cleaning potentially infectious materials.

Disease Highlights:

- **Transmission:** Most commonly, people get infected through contact with contaminated birthing materials (such as birthing fluids and placentas). Humans can also be infected by consuming unpasteurized milk and milk products.
- **Risk to Humans:** People at highest risk of infection include persons who come in contact with birthing livestock (such as veterinarians and livestock farmers). People at highest risk of severe disease include pregnant women, people with weakened immune systems due to disease or medication, and people with pre-existing heart valve disease.
- **Signs in Humans:** Only about half of all people infected with Q Fever become ill. Most common symptoms include high fever, severe headache, and body aches. Rarely, severe disease can develop (usually in high risk persons as outlined above) and cause long-lasting illness with complications such as endocarditis (inflammation of the heart valves).

If you have contact with animals that are giving birth, reduce your risk of infection by:

- Wearing disposable gloves, face mask, and eyewear when assisting with births or cleaning up birthing materials.
- Double bagging all birthing materials and putting the bags in a closed trash container for disposal. Waste can also be incinerated.
- Disinfecting contaminated areas with a strong disinfectant such as a 70 percent ethanol, 10 percent bleach solution, or a commercial quaternary ammonium compound.
- Washing your hands with soap and warm water for 20 seconds after handling animals and cleaning up birthing materials.

If you have been in contact with infected animals and are now sick, call your health care provider. Your health care provider may prescribe medications to treat your illness. If you are pregnant, have a pre-existing heart valve disease, or your immune system is weakened due to disease or medication avoid contact with birthing animals.

For More Information Visit:

CFSPH Animal Disease Information at www.cfsph.iastate.edu/DiseaseInfo/fastfacts.php
CDC Healthy Pets Healthy People at www.cdc.gov/healthypets/

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