



## TULAREMIA

### Background

Tularemia is an infection caused by the bacterium *Francisella tularensis*. It can affect people, rabbits, hares, rodents, dogs, cats, pigs, sheep, and horses. Other animals may also act as unaffected reservoirs. Outbreaks in wildlife, spread occurs through direct animals to animal contact, ticks, and biting flies.

People may be exposed to tularemia by biting flies, ticks, and improper handling of animal carcasses. Some exposures have also occurred in gardeners while mowing or cutting weeds around sites where wildlife mortalities have occurred. Onset of signs and symptoms typically occur within 3 to 5 days, but can take as long as 14 days to develop. People often have fever, headaches, diarrhea, muscle aches, joint pain, dry cough, and swollen lymph nodes. There may also be an open sore that is slow to heal. Tularemia has not been known to spread from person to person.

### Management

In wildlife in Arizona, tularemia has been most commonly associated with mortalities in cottontails. Often the only sign is sudden death. Examination of the carcass may reveal small white spots on the liver and spleen.

Limit your potential exposure to tularemia by wearing long pants and long-sleeved shirts. Apply insect repellent, especially to areas around where insects could access your skin (bottom of pants and around wrists). Wear gloves and long-sleeves if handling domestic or wild animals.

Tularemia is treatable. Anyone who feels ill after an outdoor recreation event where exposure could have occurred should see their doctor. If appropriate, the doctor will prescribe an antibiotic.

### Reporting

To report dead wildlife, please call the Wildlife Disease Hotline at 877-972-8426. Wildlife health personnel will respond Monday through Friday during normal business hours. You can leave a message if it is before or after business hours. Fresh samples are required for testing. Recently dead animals may be collected by wearing gloves, double bagged, and frozen. If you have a wildlife related emergency, please call our 24 hour dispatch center at (623) 236-7201. If the animal you are calling about has been shot and you are reporting possible illegal activity, call Operation Game Thief 800-352-0700.

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**azgfd.gov | 602.942.3000**

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