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What is glanders?

Glanders is a disease caused by the bacterium *Burkholderia mallei*. The disease mainly affects horses, but it can also affect donkeys, mules, goats, dogs and cats. The bacteria can spread from infected animals to humans.

Who gets glanders?

Glanders is not normally found in the United States. People who get glanders usually have worked with animals that have the disease. No cases of glanders have occurred naturally in the United States since the 1940s. The disease still occurs in other parts of the world such as Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and Central and South America.

How is glanders spread?

People who get the disease usually have had close contact with an infected animal. The bacteria enter the body through cuts or scrapes in the skin or through the eyes, nose, or mouth. No cases of person-to-person spread have been reported in the United States.

What are the symptoms of glanders?

The symptoms of glanders depend on how the organism enters the body. Common symptoms of glanders include fever with chills, muscle aches, chest pain, muscle tightness, and headache. Other symptoms may include watery eyes, sensitivity to light, skin rash, ulcers, pneumonia and diarrhea. Some people might develop a chronic infection in which symptoms come and go over a long period of time.

How soon after exposure do symptoms appear?

When symptoms start depends on the type of exposure. Usually, symptoms appear within 1-14 days but may occur many months after exposure.

How is glanders diagnosed?

Glanders is diagnosed through special laboratory tests. Samples can be taken from different parts of the body, such as blood, saliva, urine or skin lesions.

What is the treatment for glanders?

Glanders is treated with antibiotics. Healthcare providers choose the antibiotic based on the patient's symptoms and the results of laboratory tests.

How can glanders be prevented?

There is no vaccine for glanders. In countries where glanders is common in animals, prevention of the disease in humans involves treating infected animals. When caring for patients with glanders, healthcare providers can prevent the spread of the bacteria by using common blood and body fluid precautions such as wearing gloves, gowns and protective eyewear.

Could glanders be used for bioterrorism?

Yes. The bacteria that cause glanders are considered possible bioterrorism agents because they could be intentionally released in the air, food, or water. If these bacteria are inhaled or ingested, they could cause severe disease.

How can I get more information about glanders?

- If you have concerns about glanders, contact your healthcare provider.
- Call your local health department. You can find your local health department at vdh.virginia.gov/health-department-locator/.

[Glanders: Overview for Health Care Providers](#) (Updated May 2023)

Two page summary of: Organism, Reporting, Infectious Dose, Occurrence, Natural Reservoir, Route of Infection, Communicability, Case-fatality Rate, Risk Factors, Incubation Period, Clinical Manifestations, Differential Diagnosis, Laboratory Tests/Sample Collection, Treatment, Vaccine

[Glanders: Guidance for Health Care Providers](#) (Updated May 2023)

Key Medical and Public Health Interventions After Identification of a Suspected Case

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