

# **Tularemia Extended and Short Messages**

## **Health and Safety Information for the First Hours**

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Grade Level: 10.4

## **Tularemia Extended Message**

### **Health and Safety Information for the First Hours**

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***What is happening?***

- This is an urgent health message from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- Public health officials have confirmed that *xxx* cases of tularemia have been diagnosed in *xxx area*.
- They are concerned that the bacteria that cause tularemia might have been deliberately released since it would be unusual to find so many cases in one area occurring naturally.
- Tularemia is a rare, potentially serious illness caused by bacteria usually found in animals. People most often get naturally occurring tularemia through contact with infected animals such as rabbits or from bites of infected ticks or deerflies. It could also be spread through the air, food, or water supply.
- Local, state, and federal officials, including HHS, FBI, and Homeland Security, are working together. Updates will be made as soon as officials know more.
- Tularemia is considered highly infectious. However, it can't be spread from person to person.
- Symptoms of tularemia may include sudden fever, chills, coughing, and body aches. These symptoms usually develop within 3 to 5 days after being exposed to the bacteria.
- Tularemia can be treated effectively with the right medicine. If you think you've been exposed to tularemia bacteria, call your local public health department at *xxx-xxx-xxxx* or your doctor as soon as possible even if you don't feel sick.
- If you live in *xxx area*, wash your hands often with soap and water, and cook your food thoroughly. Avoid touching sick or dead animals.
- We have challenges ahead, and we are working to find out more about this outbreak. By staying informed and following instructions from health officials, you can protect yourself, your family, and the community against this public health threat.
- For more information on tularemia, visit the HHS Web site at <http://www.hhs.gov>, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Web site at <http://www.bt.cdc.gov/agent/tularemia/>, or call the CDC Hotline at 1-800-CDC-INFO for the latest information.

- This message contains additional information that can help protect your health and the health of others.

***What is tularemia and can it spread from person to person?***

- Tularemia is a potentially serious illness caused by bacteria usually found in animals (especially rodents, rabbits and hares). On average, about 125 cases are diagnosed in the United States each year.
- Naturally-occurring tularemia is most often passed to people through contact with infected animals. People sometimes get sick after hunting, getting tick or deerfly bites, or handling infected animals such as rabbits and rodents. Tularemia can also be spread through the air, food, or water supply.
- This disease can be life threatening, but people usually recover when they are treated in time with the correct antibiotics.
- Even a small number of tularemia bacteria can cause illness, so it is considered very infectious.
- Tularemia is not known to spread from person to person like a cold or the flu. You cannot “catch” tularemia from someone who is sick. People who have tularemia do not need to be isolated.

***What are the symptoms of tularemia?***

- Symptoms of tularemia depend on the strength of the bacteria and how they enter the body.
  1. When tularemia bacteria enter a cut on your skin, symptoms may include sores or blisters at the site of the cut.
  2. When tularemia bacteria are breathed in, symptoms may include a sudden fever, chills, coughing, and aches. These symptoms are similar to those of the flu.
- Symptoms may appear within 3 to 5 days after exposure to tularemia bacteria. However, they can take up to 14 days to appear.

***What to do if you have the symptoms of tularemia and you were recently in the xxx area***

- If you think you might have tularemia, start medical treatment as soon as possible.
- Since many of the symptoms of tularemia can be similar to those of the flu, anyone with flu-like symptoms in the *xxx area* should seek medical care immediately. The right antibiotics can be used to treat tularemia.
- For more information on how to get diagnosed and get antibiotic treatment if needed, call your local public health department at xxx-xxx-xxxx or your doctor as soon as possible. Describe your symptoms and explain that you are concerned that you might have tularemia. Let health officials know if you are pregnant or have a weakened immune system.

***What to do if you are or have been near xxx area and do not have symptoms***

- If you have been near the *xxx area* recently, you may have had contact with tularemia bacteria.
- If you were in the affected area, even if you don’t feel sick, call your local public health department at xxx-xxx-xxxx. They can help determine if you need treatment based on your location and any new information they have about the outbreak.

- It is natural to be concerned or afraid at a time like this. By staying informed and following instructions from health officials, you can protect yourself, your family, and the community against this public health threat.
- People who are concerned about being exposed to tularemia will be evaluated to see if they need medical care. If you do have tularemia, get treatment as soon as possible.

***What to do to protect yourself***

- To be as careful as possible, if you are in the *xxx area* where cases have been reported, health experts recommend that you:
  - Eat and drink only food and water from safe sources, including canned or packaged foods and bottled water.
  - Practice safe food handling techniques, including washing cooking surfaces thoroughly, washing hands with soap and water before and after handling foods, and cooking foods thoroughly.
  - Use DEET-containing insect repellent on your skin and spray clothing with repellent containing permethrin to prevent insect and tick bites.
  - Note any changes in the behavior of your pets, including rabbits and rodents, and also the behavior of livestock. Call your veterinarian if they show any unusual symptoms, as this might indicate exposure to the bacteria.
  - Avoid touching sick or dead animals.
  - Stay informed by turning to the radio, television, or Internet news for updated health and safety announcements.

***What is being done and how to get more information***

- Public health officials are working to determine the source and extent of the outbreak and will keep you updated as soon as they know more.
- Health authorities are working to help people who may have been exposed to tularemia, particularly those who have symptoms of tularemia.
- We have challenges ahead, and we are working to find out more about this outbreak. By staying informed and following instructions from health officials, you can protect yourself, your family, and the community against this public health threat.
- Go to [insert local media information here] to hear the latest information from local officials.
- For more information on tularemia, visit the HHS Web site at <http://www.hhs.gov>, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Web site at <http://www.bt.cdc.gov/agent/tularemia/>, or call the CDC Hotline at 1-800-CDC-INFO for the latest information.

Grade Level: 11.5

## **Tularemia Short Message**

### **Health and Safety Information for the First Hours**

- This is an urgent health message from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- Public health officials have confirmed that *xxx* cases of tularemia have been diagnosed in *xxx area*.
- They are concerned that the bacteria that cause tularemia might have been deliberately released since it would be unusual to find so many cases in one area occurring naturally.
- Tularemia is a rare, potentially serious illness caused by bacteria usually found in animals. Naturally-occurring tularemia happens most often due to contact with infected animals such as rabbits or ticks or insects. Tularemia can also be spread through the air, food, or water supply.
- Even a small number of tularemia bacteria can cause illness, so it is considered highly infectious. However, it is usually not contagious, meaning it can't be spread from person to person.
- Symptoms of tularemia may include sudden fever, chills, coughing, and body aches. These symptoms usually develop within 3 to 5 days after being exposed to the bacteria.
- Tularemia can be treated effectively with the right medicine. If you think you've been exposed to tularemia bacteria and you live in *xxx area*, call your local public health department or doctor as soon as possible even if you don't feel sick.
- To help protect yourself, wash your hands often with soap and water, and cook your food thoroughly. Avoid touching sick or dead animals.
- We have challenges ahead, and we are working to find out more about this outbreak. By staying informed and following instructions from health officials, you can protect yourself, your family, and the community against this public health threat.
- Go to [insert local media information here] to hear the latest information from local officials.
- For more information on tularemia, visit the HHS Web site at <http://www.hhs.gov>, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Web site at <http://www.bt.cdc.gov/agent/tularemia/>, or call the CDC Hotline at 1-800-CDC-INFO for the latest information.