



How Feral Swine Hunters Can Protect Themselves and Their Families from Brucellosis

What is brucellosis?

Brucellosis (also called Malta fever or undulant fever) is an infection caused by several species of *Brucella* bacteria. These bacteria normally infect animals like cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, dogs, feral swine and other game. Brucellosis can be passed from infected animals to people in certain situations. **In South Carolina, most brucellosis infections come from contact with infected feral swine.**



What are the symptoms of brucellosis?

Symptoms are usually not specific and can include:



Fever



Weight loss



Night Sweats



Fatigue



Joint and muscle pain



Headache

In some cases, people develop **long-term infections** in the **brain, heart, spleen** or **liver** which can **cause severe illness** or **death**.

Most people develop symptoms within the first eight weeks after exposure, but it can take as long as **six months** for symptoms to show.

How do hunters become infected with brucellosis?

Hunters get sick when an **infected animal's blood or body fluids comes in contact with the eyes, nose, mouth, or cuts in the skin.** This can happen when a hunter is:



Skinning or field dressing an animal



Butchering an animal



Having contact with an infected hunting dog



Preparing the meat for cooking



Eating undercooked game meat

How can brucellosis be prevented?

There are several ways to keep yourself and your family safe from brucellosis:



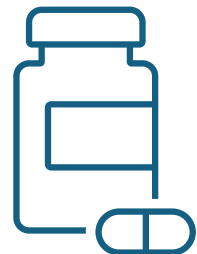
- Do NOT approach sick or dead wild animals.
- Do NOT eat sick animals or animals you have found dead.
- Do NOT touch a swine carcass with your bare hands.
- Do NOT feed hunting dogs raw game meat or let them play with the carcass. If your dog shows signs of illness such as: weight loss, swollen glands, swollen testicles, weak puppies, miscarried puppies, or poor fertility, contact your veterinarian.



- Wear protective clothing when handling feral swine including rubber gloves, cut gloves, eye protection, and a mask.
- Wear boots that can be easily disinfected.
- Wash your hands with soap and water anytime you handle feral swine or meat.
- Clean and disinfect all knives and equipment.
- Cook meat to an internal temperature of 160 F before eating.

How is brucellosis diagnosed and treated?

Your doctor will perform blood tests to check for brucellosis. Patients with brucellosis are treated with antibiotics for at least six weeks. Some patients may need longer treatments depending on the severity and location of the infection.



If you develop symptoms within one week to six months after handling feral swine, call your doctor and let them know you have hunted feral swine!

For more information visit: [cdc.gov/brucellosis/about](https://www.cdc.gov/brucellosis/about)