

Babesiosis • Fact Sheet

What is babesiosis?

Babesiosis is a preventable and treatable parasitic disease which is spread by the bite of certain types of ticks.

Who can get babesiosis?

Anyone. People who spend time outdoors in areas where babesiosis is found are at higher risk for infection.

How do people get babesiosis?

People can get infected with *Babesia* parasites in several ways:

- By the bite of an infected tick (the most common way)
- Through a blood transfusion from an infected donor
- From an infected mother to her baby

Where is babesiosis found in the United States?

Tickborne babesiosis is most common in particular regions:

- The Northeast (New England, New York, and New Jersey)
- The upper Midwest (Wisconsin and Minnesota)

What are the symptoms and signs of babesiosis?

- Many people do not have any symptoms and do not get sick
- Some people may get sick from the infection and may have:
 - Flu-like symptoms, such as fever, chills, headache, or body aches
 - A low red blood cell count (anemia)
- Some people are more likely to have severe illness, including:
 - Elderly people
 - People with other illnesses
 - Individuals without a spleen



For more information, please visit the babesiosis website at www.cdc.gov/parasites/babesiosis or contact the Parasitic Diseases Branch Public Inquiries desk at 404-718-4745, parasites@cdc.gov.



What should I do if I think I might have babesiosis?

If you think you might have babesiosis, you should see your healthcare provider.

How is babesiosis diagnosed and treated?

Babesiosis is diagnosed by examining blood for the parasite. Effective treatments are available. See your healthcare provider.

What can I do to prevent babesiosis?

The best way to prevent babesiosis is by avoiding areas where ticks are found. If you live in or visit areas inhabited by ticks:

- Walk on cleared trails; avoid areas with overgrown grasses or brush.
- Wear long pants, long-sleeved shirts, and socks when outdoors. Tuck the pant legs into the socks.
- Apply repellents to skin and clothing. Follow the instructions on the product label.
- Shower soon after being outdoors.
- Check your entire body for ticks after being outdoors. If you find an attached tick, remove it as soon as possible. For information about the best ways to remove a tick, visit www.cdc.gov/ticks.