

# OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY ALERT

## Veterinary Workers and Bartonellosis

**Bartonella species** are stealth bacteria that lead to minor or severe disease in people and their pets.

People who are routinely exposed to animals in their workplace, such as...

- **Veterinary workers**
- **Animal rescue/shelter employees**
- **Kennel staff**

should be aware of common *Bartonella* species infections like cat scratch disease (CSD) or trench fever.



**Bartonellosis can lead to non-specific symptoms and health conditions that are difficult to diagnose without advanced testing.**

### Risk Factors

- Exposure to fleas, ticks, ice, and biting flies
- Compromised immune function related to:
  - HIV/AIDS
  - Drug therapies
  - Age
- Regular contact with animals at home or through work

### Symptoms

Psychiatric illness, nerve damage, arthritis, organ damage, loss of vision, fever, headache, bone and muscle aches/pain, malaise, swollen lymph nodes, insomnia, anemia, and more have been reported.

### Transmission

*Bartonella* species are commonly transmitted via bites or feces from insect vectors and ticks.

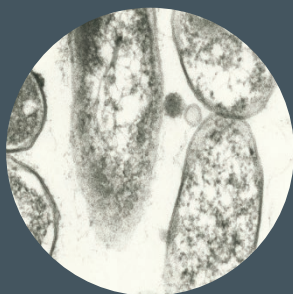
Animal workers are likely infected when recently flea-infested animals, especially cats, scratch or bite them. Research suggests that occupational hazards, like accidental needle sticks, can pose a significant risk as well (Oliveira et al 2010).



**Researchers at Duke University and NC State University found that 28% of symptomatic veterinarians were positive for at least 1 *Bartonella* species using Bartonella ePCR<sup>TM</sup> (Lantos 2015).**

The National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians (NASPHV) lists *Bartonella* species as zoonotic pathogens of importance to veterinary workers in their compendium of veterinary standard precaution protocols.

### Interested in testing?



Experts recommend a combination of molecular (DNA) and serology (antibody) testing for confirmation of acute or chronic *Bartonella* species infections.

If you think you may be experiencing symptoms related to bartonellosis, discuss Galaxy's Bartonella ePCR and Bartonella IFA serology testing with your physician.

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