

How is brucellosis spread?

Dog-to-dog spread of brucellosis occurs most often through breeding and by contact with vaginal discharges, semen, birthing fluids, and urine. Contact with an infected dog's blood, milk, saliva, and feces are less common sources of infection.

Brucellosis can spread from dogs to people through contact with an infected dog's birthing fluids and vaginal discharge or infected puppies. This is why dog breeders and veterinarians are at higher risk. Rarely, brucellosis can be spread from family pets to people through contact with urine, saliva, and other bodily fluids from infected dogs.

What are the symptoms?

In female dogs, the most common symptoms are aborted pregnancies, stillbirth, and inability to become pregnant. In males, the primary symptom is the inability to sire puppies. Both sexes may have swollen lymph glands, eye disease, and infections of the spine. However, most infected dogs appear normal and show no symptoms except for infertility. Female dogs can deliver healthy-appearing, but infected puppies.

Brucellosis in people normally causes a fever, headache, swollen lymph glands, night sweats, joint and muscle aches, fatigue, weight loss, and swollen liver and/or spleen. Some people may not have any symptoms.

For more information, contact:
Mississippi Board of Animal Health,
601-359-1170, www.mbah.ms.gov.

*This information was adapted from
the Canine Brucellosis and Foster-
Based Rescue Dog Brochure by the
Minnesota Department of Health*

& created in conjunction with



MISSISSIPPI STATE
UNIVERSITY™

COLLEGE OF
VETERINARY MEDICINE



Mississippi Board of Animal Health
P.O. Box 3889
Jackson, MS 39207

Phone: 601-359-1170
Fax: 601-359-1177
E-mail: msstatevet@mdac.state.ms.us

Canine Brucellosis: Information For Pet Owners



Mississippi Board of Animal Health

James A. Watson, D.V.M.

State Veterinarian

What is canine brucellosis?

Canine brucellosis is a disease found in dogs caused by a type of bacteria called *Brucella canis*. Infected dogs can also spread the disease to people.



Who gets brucellosis?

Dogs and people can become infected with brucellosis.

Dogs that have not been spayed or neutered (intact) are at higher risk of having brucellosis. This includes dogs in breeding programs and intact unowned stray or owned free roaming dogs.

In people, dog breeders and veterinarians are most at risk of infection because of their work with birthing puppies (whelping). People can also get brucellosis from their family pet, but this is much less common.

How do you test for brucellosis?

Testing for brucellosis can be very difficult. Not all infected dogs will test positive, and dogs may require several tests to decide if they have brucellosis. Your veterinarian may recommend testing your dog if it is sick or has had contact with a brucella-infected dog.



What are the recommendations or rules in Mississippi for canine brucellosis?

- ◆ All dogs crossing state lines must be inspected by a licensed veterinarian and have a valid health certificate (certificate of veterinary inspection).
- ◆ Dogs over three months old must be vaccinated for rabies.
- ◆ *Brucella canis* is reportable in MS but there are no specific regulations in MS pertaining to the disease. Your veterinarian can provide additional information on canine brucellosis and ways to protect your dog.
- ◆ If your dog tests positive, consult your veterinarian to discuss options for treatment and monitoring.
- ◆ People who assist with puppy birthing or breeding dogs should wear gloves and thoroughly wash hands when working with litters and during cleaning/disinfection.

Can brucellosis be treated?

In dogs brucellosis is very difficult to treat and relapses are common. Treatment includes spaying or neutering, giving antibiotics for several months, and frequent blood tests to monitor treatment progress. Treatment is typically not attempted for dogs in breeding kennels and when dogs can not be regularly tested and isolated from other dogs and people, potentially for the life of the dog.

Brucellosis is treatable in people. Treatment involves taking antibiotics daily for several months, regular monitoring, and may also involve surgery.