

ZOO NOTIC DISEASES

Animals play a large part in our everyday lives at home or work or during travel. However, animals can carry harmful germs like viruses, bacterial, parasites and fungi that can be transmitted to people and cause illness. These illnesses – known as zoonoses or zoonotic diseases – can range in severity from mild to serious and can even cause death. Though animals may appear healthy, they may carry germs that can make people sick.

Zoonotic diseases are very common. Scientists estimate that more than six out of every 10 known infectious diseases are transmitted between humans and animals, and three out of every four new or emerging infectious diseases in people come from animals.

HOW DO GERMS SPREAD FROM ANIMALS TO HUMANS?

- Direct contact with saliva, blood, blood, urine, mucous, feces or other body fluids of an infected animal.
- Indirect contact from areas that animals live and roam or objects and surfaces that have been contaminated with germs.
- Vector-borne contact, such as bites from ticks, mosquitoes or fleas.
- Food or water contaminated with feces from an infected animal.

HOW CAN YOU PROTECT YOURSELF?

- Wash your hands.
- Prevent bites from mosquitoes, ticks, and fleas.
- Avoid bites or scratches from animals.
- Learn how to handle food safely.
- Be aware of zoonotic disease at home and while traveling.

EXPOSURE AND TREATMENT

If you believe you may have been exposed to a zoonotic disease at work, notify your supervisor as soon as possible. Report the exposure immediately to the Biosafety Occupational Health Program (BOHP). You will then be referred to a qualified occupational health provider for consultation and any necessary treatment.

For questions, contact BOHP at 979-845-6649 or bohpt@tamu.edu.