



## MACOMB COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

# GLANDERS

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

### Glanders FAQ

- Glanders is an infectious disease caused by a bacterium.
- It primarily affects horses but can also affect donkeys and mules.
- It can be naturally contracted by goats, dogs, and cats.
- Human infection, although not seen in the United States since 1945, has occurred rarely and sporadically among laboratory workers and those in direct and prolonged contact with infected domestic animals.

### Why are we concerned about glanders?

Glanders is considered a potential agent for biological terrorism.

Very few organisms are required to cause the disease.

### How common is glanders?

- The United States has not seen any naturally occurring cases since the 1940s.
- It is still commonly seen among domestic animals in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and Central and South America.

### How is glanders transmitted and who can get it?

- People can become infected through direct contact with infected animals.
- The bacteria can enter the body through the skin, eyes and nose.
- Sporadic cases have been documented in veterinarians, horse caretakers,

### What are the symptoms of glanders?

- Generalized symptoms include fever, muscle aches, chest pain, muscle tightness, and headache.
- Additional symptoms have included excessive tearing of the eyes, light sensitivity, and diarrhea.



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## What are the symptoms of glanders (continued)?

The symptoms depend upon the route of infection.

- **Localized Infection** If there is a cut or scratch in the skin, a localized infection with ulceration will develop within 1 to 5 days at the site where the bacteria entered the body. Lymph nodes may also be swollen. Infections involving the mucous membranes in the eyes, nose, and respiratory tract will cause increased mucus production from the affected sites.
- **Lung (pulmonary) Infection** In lung infections, pneumonia, abscesses, and fluid in the lungs can occur. Chest X-rays will show localized infection in the lobes of the lungs.
- **Bloodstream Infection** Glanders bloodstream infections are usually fatal within 7 to 10 days.
- **Chronic Infection** The chronic form of glanders involves multiple abscesses within the muscles of the arms and legs or in the spleen or liver.

## Where is glanders usually found?

The disease is usually found in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and Central and South America.

## Can glanders spread from person to person?

In addition to animal exposure, cases of human-to-human transmission have been reported.

## Can glanders be prevented?

- No vaccine is available for glanders.
- In countries with animal cases, identification and elimination of the infection in the animal population is important.

## Is there a treatment for glanders?

Because human cases of glanders are rare, there is limited information about effective antibiotic treatment.

## How can I get health advisories or alerts?

- In the event of a public health threat or emergency, the Macomb County Health Department will make frequent public announcements.
- Listen to local radio and TV for more information. You may also visit <http://macombcountymi.gov/publichealth> or call 586-466-7923 for instructions.

### MORE GLANDERS INFORMATION

Glanders (CDC)  
[http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/diseaseinfo/glanders\\_g.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/diseaseinfo/glanders_g.htm)

Call the CDC at **1-800-CDC-INFO** or  
**1-888-232-6348 (TTY)**.

### CONTACT INFORMATION

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<http://macombcountymi.gov/publichealth>