

Overview

- Animals such as cattle, poultry (birds), rats and pigs can carry and spread germs that cause diseases.
- Animals can carry germs in their bodies when they are alive and in their meat when they are slaughtered for food. Animal by-products, such as milk or eggs, can also carry germs.
- Animals that have died (including foetuses that aborted or animals that died during birth) can also carry germs.
- To avoid spreading diseases, it is important to wear personal protective equipment and follow recommended hygiene practices when dealing with live or dead animals and their by-products.

Disease	Animals	Signs and symptoms (in infected animals)	Transmission	
Rift Valley fever	Sheep, cattle. other animals.	Abortion; deaths in young.	Transmitted by mosquito bites; droplets in the air; the blood of sick animals; the bodies of infected dead animals.	
Avian influenza	Wild and domestic poultry (birds).	Death or neurological signs; may have no signs of illness.	Transmitted through droplets in the air; feathers; and potentially the eggs and meat of infected birds.	
Monkeypox	Mainly monkeys. Also rats, squirrels and prairie dogs.	Mainly none. Skin sores, breathing problems in prairie dogs.	Transmitted by touching infected animals or their body fluids; the bite or scratch of an infected animal; the meat of infected animals.	
Plague	Mainly rats. Also rabbits, squirrels and prairie dogs.	None in above.	May cause disease in cats and occasionally dogs.	Transmitted by flea bites; droplets in the air; the bodies of dead infected animals.
Leptospirosis	Cattle, pigs, rodents (mainly rats).	Abortion; liver and kidney disease. None in rats.	Transmitted by contact (through a cut, eyes, mouth etc.); or ingestion of the urine of an infected animal.	
MERS	Camels.	None.	Transmitted by close contact with an infected animal or person.	

Disease	Animals	Signs and symptoms (in infected animals)	Transmission	
Hantavirus pulmonary syndrome	Rodents (mainly rats).	None.	Transmitted by droplets of rodent urine or faeces in the air; the bodies of dead infected rodents; a bite or a scratch.	
Anthrax	Sheep, cattle (cows) and other animals.	Sudden death in sheep and cattle; neck swelling with breathing difficulties in pigs, dogs and cats.	Transmitted by contact with, or eating, infected animal products; spores in the air.	

How to handle and slaughter animals

Poultry (birds)

- Be careful when keeping domestic birds at home: never let the birds inside the house.
- Keep the birds in a closed pen where they have plenty of room to roam.
- Do not let children play where the birds are kept.
- Cook poultry (meat or eggs) thoroughly.
- When preparing raw meat or eggs, always use clean utensils (knives, forks) and clean surfaces. After cooking, use new utensils for eating. Never use the same utensils that you cook with.
- When slaughtering and handling poultry, be sure to protect yourself. Wear gloves and goggles if possible.
- Never touch sick or dead birds without protection.

Sheep and cows

- Keep sheep or cows in a closed pen where they have plenty of room to roam.
- Do not let children play where animals are kept.
- Cook beef and mutton thoroughly.
- Boil milk before drinking or cooking it.
- When preparing raw meat, always use clean utensils (knives, forks) and clean surfaces. After cooking, use new utensils for eating. Never use the same utensils that you cook with.
- When handling or slaughtering sheep and cows, be sure to protect yourself. Wear gloves and goggles if possible.
- Never touch sick or dead sheep or cows without protection.
- Observe cattle and sheep for signs of sickness. If you detect illness, inform the authorities.

Community messages

See the following community messages to support handling and slaughtering animals:

8 - Washing hands with soap

9 - When to wash hands

25 - Handling and slaughtering animals

