



[Home](#) → [Health Topics](#) → Cat Scratch Disease

URL of this page: <https://medlineplus.gov/catscratchdisease.html>

## Cat Scratch Disease

**Also called:** Cat scratch fever, CSD

Cat scratch disease (CSD) is an illness caused by the bacterium *Bartonella henselae*. Almost half of all cats carry the infection at some point. The infection does not make cats sick. However, the scratch or bite


[<https://medlineplus.gov/animalbites.html>] of an infected cat can cause symptoms in people, including :

- Swollen lymph nodes [<https://medlineplus.gov/lymphaticdiseases.html>] , especially around the head, neck, and upper limbs
- Fever
- Headache
- Fatigue
- Poor appetite


For people with weak immune systems, CSD may cause more serious problems. The best way to avoid CSD is to avoid rough play with cats that could lead to scratches or bites. If you do get a scratch or bite, wash it well with soap and water. If the bite or scratch gets infected or if you have symptoms of CSD, call your doctor.

*Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*

### Learn More

- About Bartonella [<https://www.cdc.gov/bartonella/about/>] (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
- Cat scratch disease [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001614.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)  
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/001614.htm>]
- Cat Scratch Disease (For Parents) [<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/cat-scratch.html>] (Nemours Foundation)  
Also in Spanish [<https://kidshealth.org/es/parents/cat-scratch.html>]
- Cat-Scratch Disease [<https://familydoctor.org/condition/cat-scratch-disease/?adfree=true>]  
(American Academy of Family Physicians)  
Also in Spanish [<https://es.familydoctor.org/condicion/enfermedad-por-aranazo-de-gato-es/?adfree=true>]
- Cats [<https://www.cdc.gov/healthy-pets/about/cats.html>] (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
- National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases [<https://www.niaid.nih.gov/>] 

### Clinical Trials

- ClinicalTrials.gov: Cat-Scratch Disease [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Cat-Scratch+Disease%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>]  (National Institutes of Health)

### Journal Articles

- Article: Seropositivity of Bartonella henselae Among Suspected Cat Scratch Disease Patients in...  
[<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40618362>]
- Article: Uncovering the truth about cat-scratch disease. [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40557109>]
- Article: Experimental Infection of Ferrets with Bartonella henselae: In Search of a...  
[<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40430742>]
- Cat Scratch Disease -- see more articles [<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/?term=%22Cat-Scratch+Disease%22%5Bmajr%3Anoexp%5D+AND+humans%5Bmh%5D+AND+english%5Bla%5D+AND+%22last+2+Years%22+%5Bedat%5D+NOT+%28letter%5Bpt%5D+OR+case+reports%5Bpt%5D+OR+editorial%5Bpt%5D+OR+comment%5Bpt%5D%29>]



MedlinePlus links to health information from the National Institutes of Health and other federal government agencies. MedlinePlus also links to health information from non-government Web sites. See our [disclaimer](https://medlineplus.gov/disclaimers.html) [<https://medlineplus.gov/disclaimers.html>] about external links and our [quality guidelines](https://medlineplus.gov/criteria.html) [<https://medlineplus.gov/criteria.html>] .

The information on this site should not be used as a substitute for professional medical care or advice. Contact a health care provider if you have questions about your health.

[Learn how to cite this page](#)