

# Babesiosis • Fact Sheet

## What is babesiosis?

**B**abesiosis is a preventable and treatable parasitic disease which is spread by the bite of certain types of ticks.

## Who can get babesiosis?

**Anyone.** People who spend time outdoors in areas where babesiosis is found are at higher risk for infection.

## How do people get babesiosis?

People can get infected with *Babesia* parasites in several ways:

- By the bite of an infected tick (the most common way)
- Through a blood transfusion from an infected donor
- From an infected mother to her baby

## Where is babesiosis found in the United States?

Tickborne babesiosis is most common in particular regions:

- The Northeast (New England, New York, and New Jersey)
- The upper Midwest (Wisconsin and Minnesota)

## What are the symptoms and signs of babesiosis?

- Many people do not have any symptoms and do not get sick
- Some people may get sick from the infection and may have:
  - Flu-like symptoms, such as fever, chills, headache, or body aches
  - A low red blood cell count (anemia)
- Some people are more likely to have severe illness, including:
  - Elderly people
  - People with other illnesses
  - Individuals without a spleen



For more information, please visit the babesiosis website at [www.cdc.gov/parasites/babesiosis](http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/babesiosis) or contact the Parasitic Diseases Branch Public Inquiries desk at 404-718-4745, [parasites@cdc.gov](mailto:parasites@cdc.gov).



## What should I do if I think I might have babesiosis?

If you think you might have babesiosis, you should see your healthcare provider.

## How is babesiosis diagnosed and treated?

Babesiosis is diagnosed by examining blood for the parasite. Effective treatments are available. See your healthcare provider.

## What can I do to prevent babesiosis?

The best way to prevent babesiosis is by avoiding areas where ticks are found. If you live in or visit areas inhabited by ticks:

- Walk on cleared trails; avoid areas with overgrown grasses or brush.
- Wear long pants, long-sleeved shirts, and socks when outdoors. Tuck the pant legs into the socks.
- Apply repellents to skin and clothing. Follow the instructions on the product label.
- Shower soon after being outdoors.
- Check your entire body for ticks after being outdoors. If you find an attached tick, remove it as soon as possible. For information about the best ways to remove a tick, visit [www.cdc.gov/ticks](http://www.cdc.gov/ticks).