

What are the symptoms?

Following infection by *C. burnetii*, about 60% of people show no symptoms. However, some people experience 'acute' symptoms that are often described as being similar to having the 'flu'.

Acute Q Fever

Typical symptoms of acute Q fever usually appear 2 to 3½ weeks after infection, last 1 to 3 weeks and include:

- Fever, which starts abruptly
- Chills
- Sweating
- Severe headache
- Weight loss
- Blurred vision
- Nausea and diarrhoea
- Extreme tiredness and confusion
- Aching muscles and joints

Acute infection often results in time off work, lasting a few days to several weeks.



Chronic Q fever

Q fever may also result in chronic disease. A common form of chronic Q fever infection is inflammation of the heart (endocarditis), which often develops in people with certain heart problems. However, individuals may also suffer from persistent infections occurring in the liver, brain and bones.

Furthermore, in certain individuals who have suffered from an 'acute' case of Q fever, a condition known as Post Q fever Fatigue Syndrome (QFS) may develop.

How can you help prevent Q Fever?

Preventative measures for Q fever include reducing the spread of the bacteria. These involve:

- Washing hands and arms thoroughly in soapy water after handling animals or carcasses.
- Washing animal body fluids from the work site and equipment.
- Minimising dust and rodents in slaughter and animal housing areas.
- Keeping yard facilities for sheep and cattle well away from domestic living areas.
- Removing protective and/or other clothing that may carry the bacteria before returning to the home environment.
- Properly disposing of animal tissues including birthing products.

Vaccination can also help prevent Q fever infection, and may be recommended for those at risk, who are eligible for vaccination.

More Information

For more information on Q fever and ways to help protect against Q fever, please speak to your doctor.

Please visit www.qfeverfacts.com.au for more information.



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Q fever: Are you at risk?



About **60%** of people show no symptoms. However, some people experience 'acute' symptoms... similar to having the 'flu'.

What is Q fever

Q fever is an illness caused by a bacterium called *Coxiella burnetii* which can be caught by humans via direct or indirect contact with infected animals or animal products. Although infected animals can transmit disease to humans, they do not show symptoms or get sick.

The illness in humans is usually mild, but may sometimes be severe with long lasting consequences.

Who is at risk?

People at increased risk of Q fever infection include:



How does Q fever spread?

Q fever is mainly spread from animals to humans via inhalation of infected particles in the air; however other less common routes of infection include contact with infected animal products such as birth products (placenta), milk, urine and faeces.

Cattle, sheep, goats, camels, cats, dogs and even native animals such as bandicoots and kangaroos can transmit the disease to humans.

