

## Q fever

Q fever is a bacterial infection caused by *Coxiella burnetii*. It can result in acute or chronic illness in humans, and is usually acquired after contact with infected animals or exposure to contaminated environments. The primary reservoirs are cattle, sheep and goats. Infections result from breathing contaminated droplets from infected animals or consumption of raw milk. Acute Q fever can be accompanied by a host of symptoms, including high fever, severe headache, malaise, myalgia, chills, sweats, nausea, vomiting, non-productive cough, diarrhea, abdominal pain and chest pain. Most people recover from acute Q fever infection, but some (<5%) develop chronic illness, which often manifests as endocarditis. Infection can be treated with antibiotics.

Up to 3% or 4% of the general population and 10% of people with a history of extensive livestock handling will test positive for Q fever at any given time, due to past lifetime exposure.

Q fever reports are rare in Oregon; in 2011 one chronic case was reported. The Washington State Department of Health investigated a goat-associated outbreak of Q fever following the detection of *C. burnetii* in a placenta collected from a goat farm in April 2011. Following an investigation of 21 farms in three states, 21 human cases were identified. Evidence of goat infection was detected in 16 of 17 herds tested.

### Q fever by year: Oregon, 2000–2011

