

Francisella tularensis infections from foods unlikely

August 13 2018



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In Germany, 41 cases of tularemia were reported in 2016. The infections are mainly due to direct contact with infected animals or with insect vectors like ticks and mosquitos.

Because contaminated foods occasionally cause tularemia outbreaks, the BfR has assessed the health risks of *F. tularensis* in foods of plant and animal origin, taking into account the tenacity of the pathogen during the processing of raw food materials. *F. tularensis* survives in acidic environments and at low temperatures, but is sensitive to heat and pressure.

The BfR has come to the conclusion that the transmission of *F. tularensis* through the food chain is unlikely in Germany based on current knowledge and given the low occurrence of the disease. The risk of contracting [tularemia](#) in Germany primarily affects professionals with high exposure to infected animals like hunters, people working in forests and gardens, or people who travel to regions where the disease is endemic.

As with other foodborne pathogens, the risk of transmission of *F. tularensis* via foods can be minimised by taking precautionary hygiene measures. In the field of food production, this includes avoiding the introduction of faecal contaminants and infected corpses into the production chain and performing decontamination measures during the production process. Consumers can protect themselves by following the general rules of kitchen hygiene when handling raw meat and, for example, always cooking meat thoroughly before consumption, in particular in the case of cut meat of hares and wild rabbits.

More information: [DOI: 10.17590/20180706-095935-0](https://doi.org/10.17590/20180706-095935-0)

Provided by BfR Federal Institute for Risk Assessment

Citation: Francisella tularensis infections from foods unlikely (2018, August 13) retrieved 6 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2018-08-francisella-tularensis-infections-foods.html>

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