



BASIC INFORMATION

WHAT IS BABESIOSIS?

- Babesiosis is a tick borne disease that can be found worldwide.
- Most cases of the disease have been reported in the coastal areas of the northeastern United States.
- People with babesiosis can be infected with another tick borne disease, such as Lyme disease, ehrlichiosis, anaplasmosis, at the same time.

WHAT ARE COMMON SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS?

- Most people with babesiosis do not have symptoms. If you do have symptoms, they will usually appear 1 to 4 weeks after you have been infected with the parasite.
- Symptoms include:
 - Chills and fever
 - Headache and muscle aches
 - Sweating
 - Fatigue
 - Nausea and vomiting
 - Weakness

WHAT CAUSES BABESIOSIS?

- Babesiosis is usually caused by a parasite called Babesia microti
- The parasite attacks red blood cells in much the same way as the parasite that causes malaria
- When a Babesia-infected tick bites a person, it introduces parasites that may cause symptoms of the disease

WHAT INCREASES MY RISK?

- The people who have an increased risk of contracting a more serious case of the disease are:
 - The elderly
 - People without a spleen
 - Transplant patients
 - People with other diseases associated with immunosuppression, such as HIV infection

WHAT ARE POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS?

- Acute respiratory distress syndrome
- Heart problems
- Low blood pressure
- Kidney failure
- Severe breathing problems

WHAT CAN I EXPECT?

- Even with treatment, you may continue to have the disease for as long as 2 months
- People with severe cases may need an exchange transfusion

HOW DO I REDUCE MY RISK?

- During outdoor activities in tick habitats, take precautions to keep ticks off the skin
 - Walk on cleared trails and stay in the center of the trail, to minimize contact with leaf litter, brush, and overgrown grasses, where ticks are most apt to be found
 - Minimize the amount of exposed skin, by wearing socks, long pants, and a long-sleeved shirt. Wear light-colored clothing to make it easier to see and remove ticks before they attach to skin
 - Apply repellents to skin and clothing, following the instructions on the product label

DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT

WHAT GENERAL MEASURES SHOULD I TAKE?

- Before considering treatment, make sure the diagnosis is correct

WHAT ARE COMMON LABS AND TESTS?

- Your health care provider can perform a blood test to find out whether you have babesiosis

WHAT ARE MY TREATMENT OPTIONS?

- Your health care provider will treat your babesiosis with an antibiotic combined with an anti-parasite medicine
- In severe cases, an exchange transfusion may be required

WHAT MEDICATIONS MAY BE PRESCRIBED?

- Your health care provider will combine an anti-parasite medicine with an antibiotic to treat the disease

WHAT CAUTIONS SHOULD I TAKE?

- When outdoors in tick habitats, walk on cleared trails and stay away from the brushes near the edges of the trail
 - You will also want to minimize the amount of skin you have exposed, in order to prevent ticks from reaching your skin

WHEN SHOULD I SEEK MEDICAL HELP?

- Seek medical help if you or a family member show any signs or symptoms of babesiosis, especially after spending time in a tick habitat

MY HEALTHCARE PROVIDER'S COMMENTS

REFERENCES

- Babesiosis. National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, n.d. Web. 30 Jan. 2013.
- Babesiosis. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 10 July 2012. Web. 30 Jan. 2013.

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