

Hot Zone Bulletin

SUBJECT: CAT SCRATCH DISEASE - CSD (BARTONELLA HENSELAE INFECTION)

Cat scratch disease (CSD), or commonly known as Cat Scratch Fever, is a bacterial disease caused by *Bartonella henselae*. Most people with CSD have either been bitten or scratched by a cat and then develop a mild infection around the point of the injury. A person with CSD may experience fever, headache, fatigue, and a poor appetite.

CAN A CAT TRANSMIT CAT SCRATCH DISEASE TO PEOPLE?

Sometimes, yes, cats can spread cat scratch disease to people. Most people get CSD from cat bites and scratches. **CSD is not a surface borne bacterial disease so common disinfectants are not effective in controlling the disease.**

Kittens are more likely to be infected and to pass CSD to people. About 40% of cats carry CSD some time in their lives. Cats that carry CSD do not show any outward signs of the illness, so you cannot tell which cats have the potential of infecting you. People with immunocompromised conditions, such as those undergoing immunosuppressive treatments for cancer, organ transplant patients, and people with HIV/AIDS, are more likely than others to have complications of CSD. Although *B. henselae* has been found in fleas, so far there is no evidence that a bite from an infected flea can give you CSD.

HOW DO I REDUCE THE RISK OF GETTING CAT SCRATCH DISEASE FROM MY CAT?

1. Avoid "rough play" with cats that may lead to scratches or bites.
2. Wash cat bites and scratches immediately with soap and water.
3. Do not allow cats to lick open wounds on your skin.
4. Control fleas.
5. If you develop an infection where you were scratched or bitten by cat or develop symptoms, such as fever, headache, swollen lymph nodes and fatigue, contact your physician immediately.