

EHRlichiosis

Ehrlichiosis is an illness caused by several species of the bacteria *Ehrlichia* (*E. chaffeensis*, *E. ewingii* and *E. muris-like*). Ehrlichiosis can be more severe than anaplasmosis, and some people may have respiratory and renal complications causing serious illness. The number of reported ehrlichiosis cases is much lower than the number of anaplasmosis cases in Wisconsin.

The Facts

- To transmit the bacteria, the tick must be attached for 12-24 hours.
- Ehrlichiosis is less common than anaplasmosis. *E. muris-like* (EML) bacteria were discovered in 2009 in Wisconsin and Minnesota.
- *E. chaffeensis* is rare but has occurred in Wisconsin.
- *E. ewingii* commonly occurs in southern states where lone star tick is abundant.

Clinical Signs

In humans, illness usually occurs five to ten days after being bitten by a blacklegged (deer) tick infected with the bacteria. Symptoms may include:

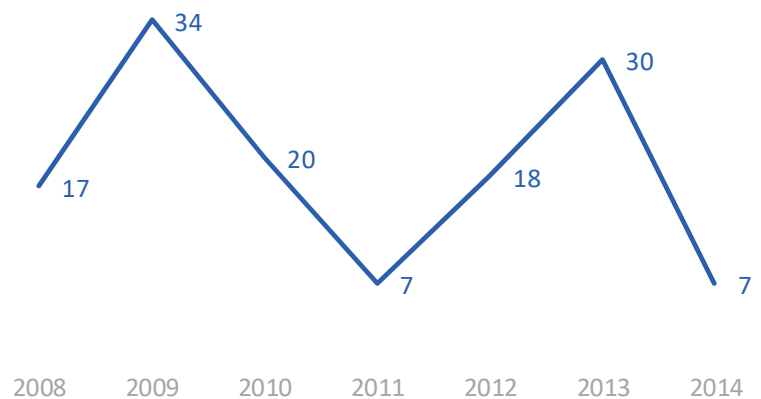
- Fever
- Severe headache
- Muscle pain
- Chills
- Fatigue
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Joint pain
- Confusion
- Rash (found in 60% of children and less than 30% of adults)

Clinical laboratory findings may include low blood count, low white blood cell count, and elevated liver enzymes.

Treatment

This disease is caused by bacteria and is therefore treatable with antibacterial medications.

Reported Total Cases of *Ehrlichia chaffeensis* in Wisconsin
Confirmed and probable by year of illness onset



Wisconsin Department of Health Services

Division of Public Health

Climate and Health Program

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