

ANAPLASMOSIS AND EHRLICHIOSIS



Anaplasmosis and ehrlichiosis are similar diseases caused by two different groups of bacteria called *Anaplasma* and *Ehrlichia*. In Wisconsin, both anaplasmosis and ehrlichiosis are spread by the bite of an infected *Ixodes scapularis* tick (also known as the black-legged tick or deer tick). In Wisconsin, anaplasmosis is far more common than ehrlichiosis, but recently there has been an increase in cases of ehrlichiosis. Anyone can get anaplasmosis or ehrlichiosis, but people who spend more time outdoors are at a higher risk of being bitten by an infected tick.

What causes it?

- Anaplasmosis and ehrlichiosis are spread to humans through the bite of an infected black-legged tick. Ticks can be found in areas with woods, brush, or tall grass.
- Anaplasmosis and ehrlichiosis are spread during the spring, summer, and fall by both adult ticks and the young nymph stage of the tick. The risk for anaplasmosis and ehrlichiosis is highest in the spring and early summer, when the nymphs are most active. People may not remember being bitten by a tick because the black-legged nymphs are very small, about the size of a poppy seed.

What are the signs and symptoms?

Symptoms of anaplasmosis and ehrlichiosis usually show up 1-2 weeks after being bitten by an infected tick. The symptoms vary greatly from person to person. People with a weakened immune system are more likely to have severe symptoms.

- Fever
- Headache
- Muscle pain
- Chills
- Fatigue
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Rash (rare with anaplasmosis)

What are the treatment options?

- If not treated, anaplasmosis and ehrlichiosis can be serious illnesses.
- Both anaplasmosis and ehrlichiosis can be treated with the antibiotic doxycycline.

How can it be prevented?

Follow these steps to reduce your risk of being bitten by a tick:

- When outdoors, wear a long-sleeved shirt, long pants, and high socks with pant cuffs tucked into the socks. Wear light-colored clothing so ticks are easier to see.
- Walk in the center of trails and try not to brush up against shrubs and tall grass.
- Wear insect repellent with 20-30% DEET, or use 0.5% permethrin on clothes. Follow directions on manufacturer's label.
- Do tick checks on yourself and others after coming in from outside and quickly remove any ticks.
- Take a shower after coming in from outside to remove insect repellent and any ticks on the body.
- Put clothing worn outside in dryer on high for at least 10 minutes to kill any ticks that may still be on clothes.

HOW TO REMOVE A TICK:



Use tweezers to remove the tick. Grip the tick by its mouthparts, as close to the skin as possible. Pull straight up. Wash the area with soap and water.

BUREAU OF COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

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