



Who

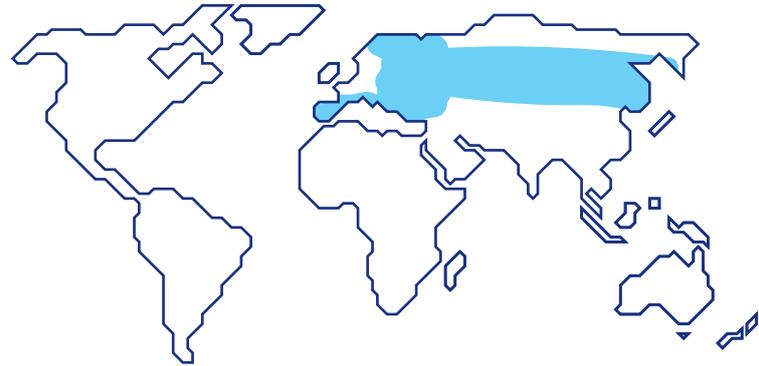
Tick-borne encephalitis is transmitted by ticks. Human exposure occurs through work or recreational activities in wooded or bushy areas where these ticks have their habitat.

At special risk are foresters and people who employ activities like camping, walking, hunting, or hiking.



What

Tick-borne encephalitis is a viral infection of the central nervous system that is transmitted by *Ixodes* ticks. Several subtypes exist, with different disease severity. The virus is transmitted from the saliva of an infected tick within minutes of the bite. Infection may also occur through the ingestion of raw milk or cheese from infected cows, sheep, or goats.



Where and when

Currently, tick-borne encephalitis occurs in Scandinavia, countries of the former Soviet Union, and countries in the western, central, and even southeastern part of Europe. The habitat of the ticks is still spreading, however. In more temperate zones, the tick vector is most active from April through September, but in Mediterranean areas the peak activity is in late fall until begin winter.



Prevention

A vaccine is available. All travelers with extensive outdoor exposures and activities in endemic regions, especially during the spring and summer months, should consider being vaccinated. Other prevention strategies include avoiding tick bites and consumption of unpasteurized milk.

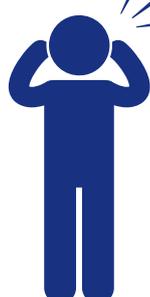


Treatment

No therapy is possible; treatment involves all necessary supportive measures.

Symptoms

The incubation period generally lasts between 7 and 14 days. In the first phase of the disease, fever, fatigue, malaise, headache, and arthralgia predominate. Neurological manifestations hallmark the second phase, with a clinical spectrum ranging from mild meningitis to severe encephalitis, which may be accompanied by paralysis. Death may occur, especially with the eastern virus subtype.



In case of infection

The clinical spectrum of the disease ranges from mild to severe, partly depending on the causative subtype of the virus. Generally, the disease course is more severe in patients over 50 years of age. Reports of chronic and progressive disease have been noted with certain subtypes; however, this occurs uncommonly.