

# Heartland Virus

## fact sheet



### *What is Heartland virus?*

Heartland virus belongs to a family of viruses called Phleboviruses, which are found all over the world. Some of these viruses can cause illness in humans. Heartland virus was first identified in Missouri in 2009. As of May 2014, ten cases have been confirmed in the United States, including two deaths. Cases have occurred in Missouri, Tennessee, and Oklahoma. The Oklahoma case was the tenth person confirmed with the virus and the second person to die from it. It is unknown at this time if the virus may be found in other areas of the United States.

### *How do people get infected with Heartland virus?*

It is not yet fully known how people become infected with Heartland virus. However, recent studies suggest that ticks, namely the Lone Star tick (*Amblyomma americanum*), may spread the Heartland virus. How people become infected is still under investigation.

### *What are the symptoms caused by Heartland virus?*

Symptoms have included fever, fatigue, headaches, muscle aches, loss of appetite, nausea, bruising easily and diarrhea.

### *Who is at risk for infection with Heartland virus?*

People who work or do activities outside may be more likely to be infected because they are more exposed to ticks or other biting insects.

### *How can people reduce the chance of getting infected with Heartland virus?*

There is currently no vaccine or drug to prevent or treat the disease. Preventing bites from ticks and mosquitoes are most important to prevent this and other diseases that can be transmitted by these insects. Additional tips to help prevent the spread of disease caused by ticks and mosquitoes are:

- Use insect repellents, following package instructions
- Wear long sleeves and pants when outdoors so ticks are easily seen and removed
- Avoid bushy and wooded areas where ticks can be transferred onto you
- Perform thorough tick checks soon and daily after spending time outdoors

### *How do I know if I have been infected with Heartland virus?*

Currently, no tests are routinely available to tell if a person is infected with Heartland virus. Tests that will help a doctor diagnose Heartland virus infection are still being developed. Consult your healthcare provider if you have any symptoms that concern you.

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## *What is the treatment for Heartland virus disease?*

There is no specific treatment for Heartland virus disease. Antibiotics are not effective against viruses. Supportive therapy can treat some symptoms. Some patients may need to be hospitalized for intravenous fluids, and treatment for pain or fever.

## *What should I do if I think I might be infected with Heartland virus?*

Consult your healthcare provider for proper diagnosis if you have any symptoms that concern you.

## *Can Heartland virus cause animals to become ill?*

It is not yet known what animals can get infected or become ill from Heartland virus. Studies are ongoing to look at this. Consult your veterinarian if your pet or livestock have any symptoms that concern you.

*For additional information on the Heartland virus and reducing exposure to ticks, visit the following websites:*

- Tulsa Health Department Epidemiology website:  
<http://www.tulsa-health.org/community-health/illness-disease>
- Oklahoma State Department of Health, Acute Disease Service tickborne diseases website:  
[http://www.ok.gov/health/Disease,\\_Prevention,\\_Preparedness/Acute\\_Disease\\_Service/Disease\\_Information/Tickborne\\_and\\_Mosquitoborne\\_Diseases/index.html](http://www.ok.gov/health/Disease,_Prevention,_Preparedness/Acute_Disease_Service/Disease_Information/Tickborne_and_Mosquitoborne_Diseases/index.html)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Heartland virus website:  
<http://www.cdc.gov/ncezid/dvbd/heartland/index.html>

Tulsa Health Department Epidemiology Department  
918-595-4441 or 918-595-4399  
[epidemiology@tulsa-health.org](mailto:epidemiology@tulsa-health.org)



Tulsa Health Department  
918 582 9355  
[www.tulsa-health.org](http://www.tulsa-health.org)

