



Mad Cow Disease

BSE

- Bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), more commonly referred to as “mad cow disease,” is a fatal neurodegenerative disease.
- BSE affects only cattle.

vCJD

- Variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (vCJD) is a degenerative neurological disorder (brain disease) thought to be the human manifestation of BSE.
- vCJD is ultimately fatal.
- It is very rare, affecting only one in one million.

Transmission and Symptoms

- vCJD is thought (but not proven) to be transmitted through the consumption of infected animal tissue, specifically beef.
- vCJD is a neurodegenerative disease, usually presenting itself similarly to dementia.
- Other symptoms
 - » Prominent psychiatric/behavioral symptoms
 - » Delayed neurologic signs
 - » Painful sensations such as burning or pins and needles from neurological malfunctions

Treatment

- Currently, there is no treatment for vCJD.
- It is an ultimately fatal disease with average illness duration of 14 months.

Prevention

- Caution should be exercised by those in Europe and other areas with indigenous cases of BSE.
- You may consider avoiding beef or beef products that are not solid tissue (sausage, ground beef, and brains).
- Be aware of beef recalls when they occur.
- Remember that the possibility for infected beef is very small.

Where to Find Additional Information

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
 - » BSE—www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvrd/bse/index.htm
 - » vCJD—www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvrd/vcjd/index.htm
 - » Information for International Travelers—www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvrd/vcjd/risk_travelers.htm
- U.S. Department of Agriculture—http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/animal_diseases/bse/index.shtml