



Directorate Communication



National Department of Agriculture



## Zoonotic diseases

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***Zoonotic diseases are diseases that people can get from animals***

## Why should you know about these diseases?

- ❖ Zoonotic diseases can be serious in people and could even lead to death
- ❖ You should know the dangers of zoonotic diseases and how people can get them so that you can prevent or reduce the risk of getting them

## How do people get zoonotic diseases?

There are different ways that people can get zoonotic diseases depending on the particular disease.

Some of the most important ways are:

- Being bitten by an infected animal (e.g. rabies)
- Eating infected meat or drinking infected milk (e.g. anthrax and tuberculosis)
- Handling infected or dead animals, aborted foetuses and afterbirths (e.g. brucellosis)



## How to prevent zoonotic diseases

**It is important to know how people can become infected by the different zoonotic diseases.**

**When you know this, you can prevent disease by avoiding the risk factors. Certain preventive measures should always be considered:**

## Good hygiene

- Always wash your hands
  - after handling animals, carcasses or meat
  - after using the toilet
  - before eating or preparing food



- ❖ **Use toilets. Never use the veld as a toilet, or if you have to, dig a deep hole and cover up with soil**
- ❖ **Clean up dog and cat faeces lying around and prevent children from coming into contact with these**

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## Correct food preparation



- When slaughtering animals, cutting up meat and preparing food avoid contamination with dirt, flies, faeces and dirty

## water

- Do not eat meat from animals that have died either suddenly or after being ill
- Do not eat meat which contains lumps, does not look normal or has an unusual smell
- Cook meat well, particularly game

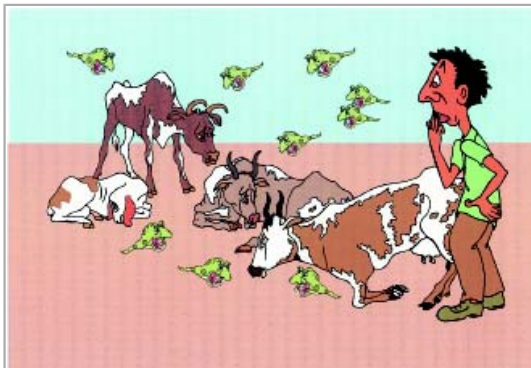


- Buy meat from reputable dealers only
- Boil milk which has not been pasteurised
- Do not keep perishable food for long periods before use
- Keep perishable food refrigerated when possible
- Wash dirt from vegetables before eating



## Take care when handling sick or dead animals, aborted fetuses and afterbirth

- Do not cut open animals which have died suddenly
- Use gloves when opening up a dead animal, handling aborted fetuses or afterbirth, or assisting during birth

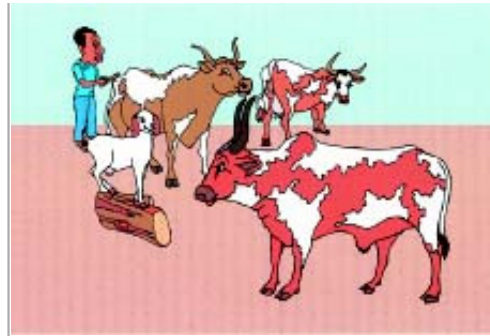


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- Wash hands in soap and water and even disinfectant after handling sick or dead animals, aborted fetuses and afterbirth
- Burn or bury carcasses, especially those from animals that have died suddenly

### Good animal health measures

❖ Vaccinate animals against the serious diseases affecting animals and people to protect both yourself and your animals (e.g. rabies, brucellosis, anthrax)



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- ❖ Deworm pets
- ❖ Have cattle tested yearly for brucellosis and tuberculosis. If the cattle are positive for these diseases, you should sell them for controlled slaughter through an outlet where the meat will be inspected. Do not sell them to other people, because you are then only passing the problem on to them
- ❖ Do not feed raw offal to animals

**Wash bite wounds promptly with soap and water and disinfectant, and seek medical attention**



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**Bites from animals can spread diseases (e.g. rabies and tetanus). There are many bacteria in an animal's mouth which can cause infection**

**Do not handle strange or wild animals that appear tame**



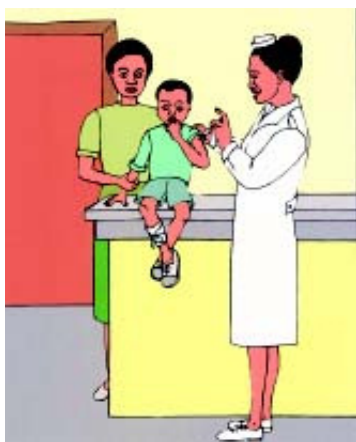
**Control rats and flies**



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**Can zoonotic diseases be treated?**

- ❖ **Some of these diseases can be treated, but you can get very sick and even die from others (e.g. rabies and anthrax)**



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- ❖ **Remember: PREVENTION IS ALWAYS BETTER THAN CURE!**

**For further information contact your animal health technician, state veterinarian, doctor or nurse**

**or**

***Animal Health for Developing Farmers,  
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Private Bag X05, Onderstepoort 0110***

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