

STONEHILL
COLLEGE
Rat Bite Fever Information Sheet

Cause: *Streptobacillus moniliformis* and "*Spirillum minus*"

Occurrence in animals: unknown

Source in animals: rodent droppings

Exposure:

Handling rats

Being bitten or scratched by a rat

ingestion of food or drink that is contaminated with rat feces

Symptoms in humans:

- abrupt onset of chills and fever, vomiting, headache and muscle pain. By this time, the wound itself has usually already healed. Within 2-4 days after the onset of fever, a rash appears on the hands and feet. One or more large joints may then become swollen, red, and painful.

- Symptoms due to "*S. minus*" usually occur 7-21 days after exposure to an infected animal. Common symptoms include fever, ulceration at the rat bite wound, swollen lymph nodes near the wound, and a distinct rash. This occurs following partial healing of the wound.

Precautions:

- Prevent rodent infestations.
- *WASH HANDS* after handling animals and their environment.
- Avoid hand-to-mouth contact.
- Use gloves to handle animals with diarrhea.
- Wear gloves, safety goggles and face mask when cleaning contaminated areas.

Additional information about salmonellosis can be found at

Preventing rodent infestations:

http://www.cdc.gov/rodents/prevent_infestations/index.html

http://www.cdc.gov/nczved/divisions/dfbmd/diseases/ratbite_fever/