



Tick-borne Encephalitis

Tick-borne encephalitis, or TBE, is a human viral infectious disease involving the central nervous system. The disease most often manifests as meningitis (inflammation of the membrane that surrounds the brain and spinal cord), encephalitis (inflammation of the brain), or meningoencephalitis (inflammation of both the brain and meninges).

How is it spread?

TBE is transmitted to humans by the bite of an infected tick or, less commonly by ingestion of in pasteurised milk from infected animals, especially goats. The virus is maintained in nature by small mammals, domestic livestock and certain species of birds.

TBE cases occur during the highest period of tick activity (between April and November), when humans are infected in rural areas through tick bites. Person-to-person transmission has not been reported.

Who is at risk?

In disease endemic areas, people with recreational or occupational exposure to rural or outdoor settings (e.g., hunters, campers, forest workers, farmers) are potentially at risk for infection by contact with the infected ticks. More men than women tend to be infected and most of these infections are caused by leisure activities such as hiking.

The vaccine is recommended particularly for spring and summer travel in warm, forested parts of the endemic areas, where ticks are most prevalent.

How can infection be prevented?

Like other tick-borne infectious diseases, TBEV infection can be prevented by using insect repellents and protective clothing to prevent tick bites.

TBE vaccine is used for the protection of individuals at high risk of exposure to the virus through travel or employment.

Vaccine recommendations

The recommended vaccine schedule for children aged over three years is three doses which are given on days 0, 1-3 months after the first dose and a third dose 5-12 months after the second dose.

For rapid short-term protection of children and adults the second dose may be given two weeks after the first dose in special circumstances. Reported reactions to TBE vaccine are rare. Local reactions such as swelling, pain and redness at the injection site may occur.