What is Brucellosis?
Brucellosis is a disease caused by a group of bacteria of the genus *Brucella*. The species of *Brucella* that cause most concern are *B. abortus*, *B. suis* and *B. melitensis*. Brucellosis is transmitted to humans through infected animals such as cows, goats, sheep, pigs and wild animals (e.g., elk, bison and coyote). Infected dogs rarely transmit the disease to their owners. Brucellosis is not a common disease in the United States; most cases are among immigrants or people who have ingested imported food or who have traveled to countries were brucellosis is common.

How is Brucellosis transmitted?
You can get brucellosis through the ingestion of unpasteurized milk and dairy products stemming from infected animals. Brucellosis is also transmitted to humans through direct contact with infected animals, contaminated carcasses, and especially aborted fetuses or placetas infected with *Brucella sp*. Transmission from person to person is very rare.

What are the symptoms of Brucellosis in humans?
The symptoms may be mild or severe, are very similar to flu, and include undulant fever, headache, profuse sweating, chills, weakness, weight loss, generalized aching, and depression. Infection of the liver and spleen, arthritis, neurological complications, and endocarditis can occur.

What are the symptoms in animals?
While cats are resistant to brucellosis, dogs may develop brucellosis. These dogs are rarely seriously ill, but symptoms may include lusterless and dry coats, decreased stamina, and abortions. Cattle, swine, goats, and sheep also develop brucellosis. Symptoms are similar to those in dogs.

How soon do the symptoms appear?
The length of time between infection and feeling sick is highly variable; usually it takes one to three weeks after infection, but sometimes may take several months before symptoms appear.

How is Brucellosis diagnosed?
Only your health care provider can perform laboratory tests to confirm a brucellosis infection. The tests include isolation of *Brucella sp* through culture of blood or testing for antibodies through serologic tests.

What is the treatment for Brucellosis?
A combination of antibiotics, such as doxycycline and rifampin, is necessary for four to six weeks.

How can I prevent Brucellosis?
The best way to prevent brucellosis is to control the disease in animal populations. Animals such as cattle, swine, goats, and sheep need to be tested and slaughtered if positive. Dogs infected with brucellosis should be neutered to reduce the spread of the disease, but may never be cured. Antibiotic therapy is not always successful in animals.

Avoid the consumption of raw milk and milk products. If you work in direct contact with animals and animal carcasses, or are a hunter, protect open wounds and wear protective clothing and gloves. Immunocompromised people (i.e., cancer patients, HIV-infected individuals, or transplantation patients) should not handle dogs or other animals known to be infected with brucellosis.

Additional Information:
- Minnesota Department of Health
  www.health.state.mn.us
- Centers for Disease Control
  www.cdc.gov/brucellosis
- Minnesota Board of Animal Health
  www.bah.state.mn.us/search/brucellosis

This fact sheet is meant to provide basic information. For specific health concerns please contact your physician or veterinarian. Updated 2015.