

**SURGERY**

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**NEUROLOGY**

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**CARDIOLOGY**

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**DERMATOLOGY**

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**CRITICAL CARE**

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**ANESTHESIA & PAIN MANAGEMENT**

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**SPORTS MEDICINE & REHABILITATION**

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**HOLISTIC MEDICINE**

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June 14, 2013

## Cats Recently Test Positive for Tularemia

Five cats have been recently diagnosed with tularemia at the University of Illinois, College of Veterinary Medicine. Tularemia, or rabbit fever, is a zoonotic bacterial disease that is sometimes seen in cats. It is associated with multiple animal species, including humans, and can be acquired from contact with other infected animals, especially rabbits, hares, and rodents. It can also be ingested through contaminated water, or through contact with infected soil, where the organism can remain in an infectious state for up to several months.

Residents of the Champaign-Urbana area are encouraged to keep their cats indoors but owners living in northern Illinois should also take extra precautions since summer can cause your cat to have an increased risk of contracting the disease. This is because the population of ticks, mites, fleas or mosquitoes is at a greater level than other seasons.

To lower your pet's risk of Tularemia when going outside, consider first consulting your veterinarian to make sure your cat is protected from fleas and ticks. Also, report any unexplained large die-offs of rodents or rabbits to your local animal control.

If you do let your cat outdoors, please keep a look out for the following symptoms of Tularemia:

- Sudden onset of fever
- Lethargy
- Mouth Ulcers
- Lack of appetite (anorexia)
- Dehydration
- Depression
- Enlargement of the lymph nodes
- Tender abdomen
- Enlargement of the liver or spleen
- White patches or ulcers on the tongue
- Jaundice – yellow eyes

If any of these symptoms are present in your outdoor cat, contact your primary care veterinarian or local emergency clinic.

People may also contract Tularemia through handling pets or wild animals infected with the disease. Tick bites can also cause Tularemia in humans. If you or someone you know develops a sudden fever, chills, headaches, diarrhea, joint pain, muscle aches, cough or weakness, contact your health care provider.