

Yale *Environmental Health & Safety*
Ureaplasma urealyticum

U. urealyticum

U. urealyticum is a risk group 2 bacterium. It is considered a **reproductive pathogen** as it can lead to stillbirth or premature delivery, postpartum bacteremia, postpartum endometritis, chorioamnionitis, spontaneous abortion, perinatal morbidity and mortality, pneumonia, and wound infection post-caesarean section.

How can I be exposed to *U. urealyticum*?

- Transmission typically occurs through sexual contact.
- Infected mothers may transmit bacteria to the fetus by intrauterine infection, via umbilical cord, or colonization of the skin during birth.
- Laboratory workers may be exposed by contact with amniotic fluid, umbilical cord blood, and placental tissue. The primary hazard is parenteral inoculation.

How can I protect myself from exposure?

- Avoid direct skin contact by wearing protective clothing and gloves.
- Avoid mucous membrane exposure by using eye/face protection for procedures that may produce splashes.
- Avoid respiratory exposure by using a biosafety cabinet or other primary containment device and wearing a respirator for procedures that may produce aerosols.
- The use of needles, syringes, and other sharp objects should be strictly limited, and additional precautions should be taken when working with animals.

What should I do if I think I've been exposed to *U. urealyticum*?

Wash the affected area immediately for 15 minutes with soap and water and seek medical attention.

What symptoms should I look for after a potential exposure?

Common symptoms include dysuria (pain during urination), lower abdominal pain,

swelling of the urethra, and bleeding or discharge from the urethra.

How long does it take for symptoms to develop?

10-20 days after sexual transmission. There have not been any human Laboratory-Acquired Infections to date to determine incubation period of parenteral inoculation.

Is there a treatment or vaccine?

Antibiotic therapy can be administered to adults and neonates. There is no vaccine.

Can I transmit it to other people?

Person to person transmission occurs through sexual contact and from mother to neonates through the birthing process.

Can I transmit it to my pets?

No, *U. urealyticum* is species specific to humans although infection has been demonstrated in experimental animals.

Can it survive on surfaces?

Survival outside of the host is severely restricted due to drying and dehydration in the absence of a cell wall.

See *Pathogen Safety Data Sheet* for More Information

