



# MAD COW DISEASE

## ***Bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE)***

- BSE more commonly referred to as “mad cow disease,” is a fatal neurodegenerative disease.
- BSE affects only cattle.

## ***Variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (vCJD)***

- vCJD is thought to be the human manifestation of BSE.
- vCJD is a degenerative neurological disorder (brain disease).
- vCJD is ultimately fatal.
- It is very rare, affecting only one in one million.



## ***Transmission (Spread of the Disease) and Symptoms***

- vCJD is thought (but not proven) to be transmitted through the consumption of infected animal tissue, specifically beef.
- vCJD is a degenerative disease, with symptoms usually similar to those of dementia.
- Other symptoms include behavioral abnormalities and painful sensations such as burning or pins and needles from neurological malfunctions.

## ***Treatment***

- No effective treatment exists for vCJD. A number of drugs have been tested, including steroids, antibiotics and antiviral agents, and have not shown benefits. For that reason, doctors focus on alleviating pain and symptoms and on making people with these diseases as comfortable as possible.

## ***Prevention***

- Caution should be exercised by those in Europe and other areas with indigenous cases of BSE.
- You may consider avoiding beef or beef products that are not solid tissue (sausage, ground beef and brains).
- Be aware of beef recalls when they occur.
- Remember that the possibility for infected beef is very small.

## ***Where to Find Additional Information***

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
  - BSE—<http://www.cdc.gov/prions/bse/about.html>
  - vCJD—<http://www.cdc.gov/prions/vcjd/>
  - Risk for Travelers—<http://www.cdc.gov/prions/vcjd/risk-travelers.html>
- U.S. Department of Agriculture—  
<http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?navtype=SU&navid=BSE>
- Ready Army—[www.ready.army.mil](http://www.ready.army.mil)

**It's up to you. Prepare strong. Get an emergency supply kit with enough supplies for at least three days, make an emergency plan with your family and be informed about what might happen.**

