



## Anaplasmosis Fact Sheet

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### WHAT IS ANAPLASMOSIS?

- Bacterial infection of white blood cells (WBC)
- Transmitted by black-legged (deer) ticks
  - Anaplasmosis plus Lyme and/or babesiosis is possible

### DISEASE

- Symptoms usually begin 1-2 weeks after a bite from an infected tick
  - Common: fever (often 102° or higher), chills, muscle aches, headache; may appear to be a “summertime flu”
  - Uncommon: nausea, vomiting, cough, rash
- Initial diagnosis is clinical – based on possible exposure to ticks, symptoms and exam findings
- Death from anaplasmosis is rare but higher in young kids, elderly, people with impaired immune systems

### LAB TESTS (performed on blood specimens)

- Polymerase chain reaction (PCR): looks for bacteria’s DNA
- Microscopy: looks for the bacteria inside WBCs
- Antibody titers measured by immunofluorescence assay method (IFA): usually two samples are tested, one at the start of illness and one 2-4 weeks later)
- Sensitivity (ability to find the illness) of tests differ, depending on timing
  - PCR and microscopy: may be positive early in illness, negative later on
  - IFA: negative in early disease, positive later on (due to the time it takes to produce antibodies)

TREATMENT is highly effective when given promptly, usually within 72 hours; should be started immediately if anaplasmosis is suspected, even if initial tests are negative

- Doxycycline – adults and **children of all ages**; usually for 7-10 days
  - Adults and children weighing more than 100 lbs: 100mg twice daily
  - Children less than 100 lbs: weight-based dose, given twice daily
- Doxycycline does not stain teeth at these doses and durations
  - No dietary restrictions; possible increase in sun sensitivity, causing people to sunburn easily
- Other antibiotics generally not effective
  - Rifampin if strong doxycycline allergy or pregnant women with mild illness
- Prevention is based on avoiding deer tick bites and treating known tick bites
  - After a bite: no evidence that a single 200mg dose of doxycycline prevents anaplasmosis
  - In areas where tick bites may transmit anaplasmosis and/or Lyme disease, antibiotic prevention requires doxycycline 100 mg twice daily for 10-20 days

(For a medical journal article on tick bite management, see Wisconsin Medical Journal, April 2011; available at: [www.wisconsinmedicalsociety.org/\\_WMS/publications/wmj/pdf/110/2/78.pdf](http://www.wisconsinmedicalsociety.org/_WMS/publications/wmj/pdf/110/2/78.pdf))

*Advancing Lyme Disease Awareness and Prevention*

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