

# Have you heard of cat scratch disease?

Did you know cat bites and scratches can make you sick? What you need to know to keep you and your family safe.



## Basic info

Cat scratch disease is a sickness caused by the bacteria *Bartonella henselae*. Cats carry the bacteria; people usually get sick after being bitten or scratched by a cat.

Some cats are more likely to give the bacteria to people, including:

- Kittens under 1 year old that are more playful.
- Cats that have fleas
- Outdoor cats

## Risk factors

## What to Watch For

- Redness, blisters or bumps near a recent cat scratch or bite
- A few weeks later, you may notice enlarged lymph nodes under the skin - these can feel like swellings, usually in the armpit or neck
- People can have fever or headache and may feel tired or lose their appetite.

## How is it Treated?

Most people with cat scratch disease don't need special treatment.

But sometimes, more serious sickness can happen that needs to be treated by a doctor.

This usually happens in people with a weaker immune system, in kids, they elderly people who are already sick.

**To be on the safe side, any cat bite should be seen by a doctor, especially if it isn't healing properly.**

## Prevention

- Keep your house and cat free of fleas
- Keep cats away from cuts or scratches on your skin
- Wash cat bites & scratches with soap & water
- Avoid handling cats you don't know