

**PATIENT ADVICE: THIS PAGE OF ADVICE SHOULD BE GIVEN WHEN A
DIGNOSIS OF BRUCELLOSIS IS MADE**

- ✿ The results of your blood test combined with your symptoms confirm a diagnosis of brucellosis.
- ✿ Your doctor will explain all of the results to you.
- ✿ The usual treatment is two antibiotics: rifampicin and doxycycline, which you are required to take for 6 weeks.
- ✿ You should feel better after one week of taking antibiotics. If not you should contact your GP.
- ✿ It is essential to complete the course of treatment, as relapse of the disease is much more likely if the course is not completed.
- ✿ The rifampicin antibiotic has to be taken 1-2 hours before or after food for it to work best.
- ✿ There are possible side effects to the medication:
 - Your urine and tears will be discoloured orange/red
 - Soft contact lenses will also be discoloured and should not be worn
 - In females treatment interferes with the efficacy of the oral contraceptive pill and an alternative form of contraception **must** be used
 - Heartburn and nausea may also be experienced
 - You may become more prone to sunburn, and should take appropriate precautions whilst outdoors
- ✿ The doctor will normally refer you to a hospital consultant.
- ✿ Patients with brucellosis usually lose a considerable amount of weight:
 - Within one week of starting treatment, you should stop losing weight
 - However, the side effects of the antibiotics mean that full regain of weight may take some time
- ✿ Once you start treatment there is no risk of human-to-human spread of brucellosis.
- ✿ An estimated 10-15% of people will suffer from a relapse even when a full course of treatment is taken.
- ✿ Re-infection due to re-exposure is also possible. Take the necessary action to make sure you are protected from reinfection see the guidance below.
- ✿ Pregnancy: Since the medication may harm the developing foetus, you should not become pregnant whilst taking the treatment.
- ✿ Blood Donation: The Northern Ireland Blood Transfusion Service has advised that certain restrictions apply to blood donation from individuals who have been identified as having brucellosis or been treated for it. Specific advice can be obtained from the Service directly by telephoning the medical helpline on 0500534669.
- ✿ Further information and advice can be obtained from:
 - The Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland, Helpline: 08000320121, Email: hse.ni@detini.gov.uk, Web: www.hse.ni.gov.uk)
 - The Consultant for Communicable Disease Control of the Health and Social Services Board. Your GP will have the contact details
 - **The following websites:**
http://www.hse.ni.gov.uk/info-guide.cfm?Folder_id=48
http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/diseaseinfo/brucellosis_g.htm