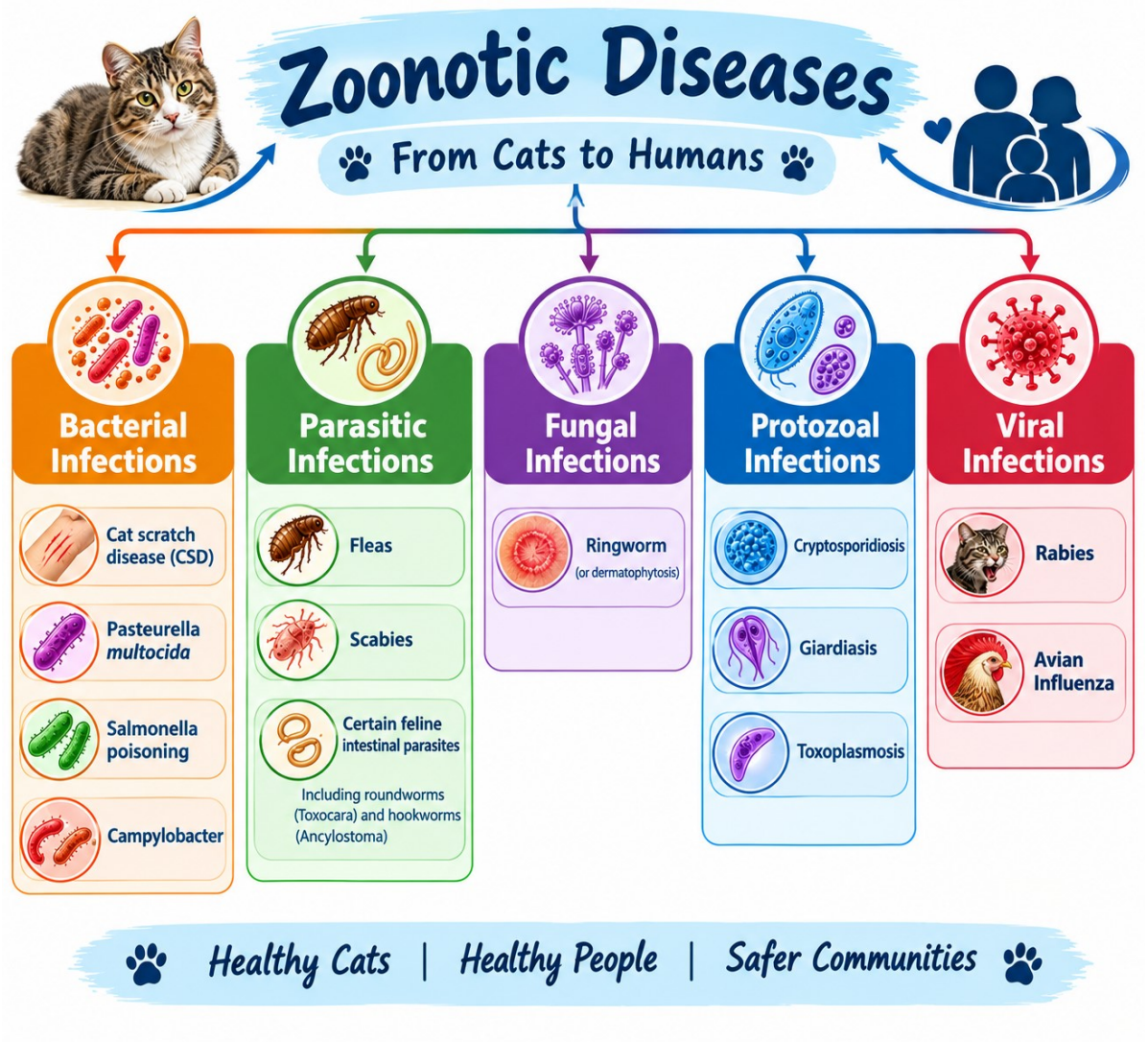
**Happy Cats, Healthy Homes: Common Zoonotic Diseases of Cats and Precautions**

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Although most feline infectious diseases only affect cats, some of these diseases can be transmitted from cats to people. Diseases that can be transmitted from animals to people are called zoonotic diseases. Here we list the most common zoonotic diseases that may be carried by cats and simple precautions that pet owners need to take to reduce risk of contracting these diseases.

Zoonotic diseases are illnesses that can spread from animals to humans. The most common zoonotic diseases associated with cats are categorized into bacterial, fungal, parasitic and viral types. However below we list some common points about important zoonotic diseases of cats and their precautionary measures that pet owners need to know for avoiding any risk.



**Common zoonitic diseases associated with cats:**

**1. Cat-Scratch Disease**

• What it is: A bacterial infection caused by Bartonella henselae.
• How it spreads: Through a cat's scratch, bite, or contact with saliva, often carried by fleas.
• Human symptoms: Swollen lymph nodes, fever, headache, and tiredness.

**2. Ringworm**

• What it is: A contagious fungal infection of the skin and hair (not actually a worm).
• How it spreads: Touching an infected cat's fur or skin, or contaminated bedding.
• Human symptoms: Round, red, itchy, crusty patches on the skin.

**3. Toxoplasmosis**

• What it is: A tiny protozoan parasite Toxoplasma gondii.
• How it spreads: Cleaning a cat's litter box containing infected stool, or touching contaminated soil.
• Human symptoms: Often mild or like the flu, but it can be dangerous during pregnancy or for people with weak immune systems.

**4. Roundworms and Hookworms**

• What it is: Intestinal worms.
• How it spreads: Accidentally swallowing microscopic worm eggs from soil, sand, or litter boxes touched by an infected cat.
• Human symptoms: Stomach pain or skin and organ irritation as larvae wander through the body.

**5. Salmonellosis**

• What it is: A bacterial infection of the gut (salmonella).
• How it spreads: Handling a cat's stool or feeding a cat raw meat.
• Human symptoms: Diarrhea, fever, and stomach cramps.

**6. Rabies**

• What it is: A deadly virus that attacks the brain and nervous system.
• How it spreads: Being bitten or scratched by a rabid animal.
• Human symptoms: Confusion, fever, and severe neurological issues (fatal if untreated).

**What's the Risk?**

The likelihood of an average person contracting a zoonotic disease from a cat is low, but individuals with immature or weakened immune systems are more susceptible to these diseases. This includes infants, individuals with acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), the

elderly, and people undergoing cancer chemotherapy or receiving other drugs that may suppress their immune systems.

**Easy Ways to Stay Safe**

**What can I do to protect my cat and myself?**

Common measures and good hygiene will help in keeping pet owners, their families and cats free of zoonotic diseases.

**Here are a few simple precautions:**

- Wash hands before eating and after handling cats
- Schedule annual checkups and fecal exams for your cat
- Seek veterinary care for sick cats and cats with lacerations or puncture wounds
- Keep rabies vaccinations current
- Maintain appropriate flea and tick control
- Avoid letting your cat lick open wounds, your face, food utensils, or plate
- Consider keeping cats indoors
- Wash cat bites and scratch wounds immediately with soap and running warm water and seek medical attention for cat bites and scratches that show signs of swelling, discharge, pustules, and that are associated with local lymph node swelling
- Feed cats cooked or commercially processed food
- Scoop litter boxes to remove fecal material daily
- Avoid having immunocompromised individuals partake in activities that may prompt cat bites or scratches
- Periodically clean litter boxes with scalding water and detergent
- Wear gloves when gardening and wash hands afterwards
- Pet owners should regularly vaccinate themselves
- Cover children’s sandboxes when not in use


Cat Zoonotic Diseases
Humani Involvement
Healthy Cats | Healthy People | One Health
Toxoplasma gondii
(Toxoplasmosis)
• Fever, lymphadenopathy
• Severe in pregnancy and immunocompromised
Toxocara cati
(Toxocariasis)
• Visceral/ocular larva migrans
• Abdominal pain, visual impairment
Bartonella henselae
(Cat scratch disease)
• Fever, lymphadenopathy
• Skin lesions
Microsporum canis
(Dermatophytosis)
• Ringworm
• Skin and hair infection
Campylobacter jejuni
(Campylobacteriosis)
• Diarrhoea, abdominal pain
• Occasionally systemic
Rabies virus
(Rabies)
• Neurological signs
• Fatal (if untreated)
Human Involvement
Through close contact, scratches, bites, faeces, litter, contaminated hands or environment.
Love their company, respect their risks
Pet owners
(close contact)
Children
(high risk)
Veterinarians & vet staff
(occupational risk)
Immunocompromised individuals
(higher risk)
Farmers / cleaners
(environmental exposure)