



Alpha-gal Syndrome Fact Sheet

What is alpha-gal syndrome (AGS)?

- Alpha-gal syndrome (AGS) is a serious, potentially life-threatening allergic conditions that can occur after a tick bite. AGS is also called the red meat allergy, tick bite meat allergy, and alpha-gal allergy. AGS is not caused by an infection or bacteria. AGS symptoms often arise after people eat red meat or are exposed to other products that contain alpha-gal.
- Alpha-gal (galactose-alpha-1,3-galactose) is a sugar molecule found in most mammals. Alpha-gal is NOT found in fish, reptiles, birds, or people. It can be found in meat (pork, beef, rabbit, lamb, venison, etc.), as well as cow's milk and milk products. Other non-food products made from mammals may contain alpha-gal as well.

How is AGS Contracted?

- AGS is associated with tick bites. Current evidence suggests that it is associated with the bite of a lone-star tick in the United States, but other ticks may also cause AGS. The lone-star tick is commonly found across Oklahoma, including across the Choctaw Nation Reservation.

Who Gets AGS?

- Anyone can get AGS. Most reported cases in the United States are among those living in the South, East, and Central United States. Most cases of AGS have been reported in adults, however, any age group is susceptible.

What are the symptoms?

- AGS reactions include symptoms of general allergic reactions such as:
 - Hives, itching or itchy, scaly skins.
 - Swelling of lips, face, tongue, throat, or other body parts.
 - Wheezing or shortness of breath.
 - Stomach pain, diarrhea, upset stomach, or vomiting.
- **AGS symptoms can be severe and even life-threatening! Seek immediate emergency care if you are having a severe allergic reaction.**

How can I prevent AGS?

- Preventing tick bites can reduce the chance of developing AGS, along with other tickborne illnesses.
- Before going outdoor, always apply EPA-approved insect repellent, walk in areas that are well kept and not overgrown, and always check yourself, clothing, pets, and children for ticks upon returning indoors.

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