

## Erysipelas

The Erysipelas bacterium is probably found on most farms across the country. Most hogs are carriers. It usually lives in the tonsils of its host. While not always, it's normally an opportunistic disease striking when the hog(s) are already under stressful conditions. It's rare to occur in pigs under 3 months old due to the immunity of colostrum.

Erysipelas can be so mild that it goes unnoticed or so severe that it causes sudden death. There are a lot of maybe's or if's with this disease making it difficult to diagnose. It can strike a healthy hog and be mild or severe, but seems to prefer occurring during or after other illnesses or injuries when the hog is already weakened. The bacterium enters the bloodstream causing septicemia. Erysipelas is spread by body fluids, in particular coughing, urine and fecal matter.

Symptoms can be: Stiffness or lameness, lack of appetite, high fever, raised pink or reddish lesions turning into diamond shape that can disappear or turn darker and the skin will die. Infertility. Abortions, stillbirths and mummies if the hog is bred. Death, which can sometimes be sudden due to heart failure. The hog may experience some or all these symptoms and in various degrees, or you may not notice any at all.

If or once recovered, the hog may experience life- long chronic arthritis and or joint swelling and tenderness.

Duration is around 14 days. The current recommended treatment is penicillin given for 3 days according to weight. Improvement is usually seen within 24 hours. Isolation is recommended.

Causes can be but not limited to: body stress and weakness from other illnesses or injuries. Stress from living in dirty areas or lack of cleaning. Sudden climate changes. Any additional stress factors such as change in diet, or new additions to the herd. Wet feeding areas in particular with milk products.

Generally Erysipelas appears when hogs are under stressful conditions but not always.



Raised diamond shaped patterns may appear anywhere on the skin. They may be so light they're not noticeable, or purple black in color depending on severity. In severe cases the skin may die. The ears or tail may drop off in severe cases.