Tularemia is a serious infectious disease caused by the intracellular bacterium (parasite) Francisella tularensis. The primary vectors are ticks, deer flies, and other arthropods. It is a known co-infection of Lyme borrelia. Ingesting infected water, soil, or food, or handling infected animals can also cause infection. Tularemia can also be acquired by inhalation. It primarily infects a type of white blood cell, thus able to evade the immune system.