

# Tick-Borne Condition Alpha-Gal: Info on It & for Those with Alpha-Gal



Lone Star Ticks. Photo Credit: James Occi, (PhD cand.) LDA Scientific & Professional Advisory Board

Alpha-gal is a sugar molecule found in most mammals (not people, apes, monkeys) and in products made from mammals including medications, vaccines, cosmetics, gelatin and milk products. It is not normally found in fish, reptiles or birds. Alpha gal is also found in some types of ticks. **Click here for CDC website on Alpha-gal**

What is known is that Alpha-gal allergy is an allergy to that alpha-gal molecule and it now appears to be associated with the bite of lone star ticks in the US. Other ticks may be involved, but the science is not yet settled in this newly emerging area. Alpha-gal is also found in other countries associated with the bite of different ticks.

**Symptoms can include:** Rash, Hives, Difficulty breathing, Drop in blood pressure, Dizziness or faintness, Nausea or vomiting, and Severe stomach pain, which commonly appear 3-6 hours after eating meat (e.g., beef, lamb, pork, venison, and rabbit) or exposure to products containing alpha-gal. They may not occur

after every exposure and can vary with individuals.

**CDC: Alpha-gal allergies can be severe, and even life-threatening. See a healthcare provider immediately if you are concerned about a severe allergic reaction.**

Diagnosis can be made by an allergist, or other healthcare provider, through detailed patient history, physical examination, and a blood test for specific antibodies, IgE, to alpha-gal.

**Patients with Alpha-gal Syndrome:** There is a non-profit devoted to the identification, diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of tick-borne diseases, including alpha-gal, and other lesser known diseases. They are conducting a research study survey of people with Alpha-gal. If you are interested in more information on it: **See Alpha-gal on the TBC United website** By clicking the link, you will have left the LDA website. The link is provided for you as a service. The LDA does not have a position on the information provided or on the study.

For more information on research on alpha-gal go to <https://www.med.unc.edu/medicine/news/chairs-corner/podcast/alpha-gal/>