

A TICK BITE CAN MAKE MEAT DANGEROUS.

One lone star tick bite can cause a lifelong allergy to most mammals. The reaction comes hours late, so it gets missed — and in 2026 the federal system that would label it, count it or cure it **still does not exist**.

WHAT IT IS

01

The tick leaves a sugar behind.

galactose- α -1,3-galactose

The immune system learns to attack it, so it attacks the meal. Not only the meal: alpha-gal is also in gelatin, heparin and bovine heart valves, which is why AGS surfaces as anaphylaxis in an operating room.⁶

Beef **contains**

Pork **contains**

Lamb **contains**

Chicken · fish · primates no alpha-gal

WHY IT IS MISSED

02

3–6 h

typical delay between the meal and the reaction³

81%

of reactions begin two or more hours after eating³

42%

of 1,500 US providers surveyed had never heard of it²

No other common food allergy behaves this way. Someone who eats at seven and collapses at midnight does not suspect dinner — nor does their physician.

THE SCALE

03

110,000+

SUSPECTED CASES · 2010–2022¹

CDC puts suspected cases above 110,000 and says as many as **450,000** may be affected — while stating that more data are needed. Both figures come from lab testing, not surveillance. Nobody has counted.¹

THREE ABSENCES, AND THEY COMPOUND

04

NO LABEL

Not a major food allergen under FALCPA. Milk is the only alpha-gal ingredient federal law requires be declared.⁴

Beef tallow in a fryer is legal, unlabeled and invisible.

NO COUNT

Still not nationally notifiable in 2026, though 13 states now require reporting and Virginia began statewide surveillance in 2025.⁵

There is no national case count, so there is no denominator for anything.

NO CURE

Omalizumab, FDA-approved in 2024 for IgE-mediated food allergy, is used off-label in AGS. Nothing is approved for AGS.⁶

Avoidance is still the whole protocol, and it depends on the labels above.

THE ASK

05

H.R. 1178

Alpha-gal Allergen Inclusion Act. Would add alpha-gal to the federal major food allergen list. The only bill that names the condition.⁷

On the Energy & Commerce Health Subcommittee agenda 2026-04-29. Dies if the 119th Congress ends without a vote.

FDA-2024-P-4512

Petition asking FDA to declare animal-derived ingredients in *drugs and supplements* by species. Filed for animal welfare; it helps AGS by side effect.⁸

Filed 2024-09-24. Open for comment. No final FDA response located.

COMMENT. THEN CALL.

regulations.gov
Docket FDA-2024-P-4512

¹CDC, About Alpha-gal Syndrome: >110,000 suspected cases 2010-2022; up to 450,000 possibly affected; CDC states more data are needed. The 90,018 figure covers 2017-2022 only (MMWR 72(30):815-820).

²CDC, Health Care Provider Knowledge Regarding AGS. MMWR 72(30):809-814. n=1,500; 5% felt very confident managing it.

³81% of reactions begin at or after 2 h, n=261, doi:10.1016/j.jaip.2019.03.031. 60.6% at 2-4 h, n=40, doi:10.23822/EurAnnACI.1764-1489.35. Onset of 3-6 h is the characteristic presentation.

⁴FALCPA, Pub. L. 108-282; 21 U.S.C. §343(w). CDC Fast Facts: cow's milk is the only alpha-gal-containing major food allergen, so beef tallow is exempt.

⁵CDC: AGS is not nationally notifiable; jurisdictions are encouraged to report. 13 states require reporting as of 2026; Virginia began statewide surveillance with mandatory lab reporting in September 2025. CSTE case definition, 2021.

