Streptococcus uberis is not your typical mastitis agent.

**Hidden from Sight:** The predominant mastitis pathogen today is Streptococcus uberis. Did you know that 90-95% of Streptococcus mastitis is subclinical? It can’t be seen cow-side, because there is no visible change to the milk or the mammary gland. And, although it is associated with elevated somatic cell counts, more often than not streptococcal mastitis can’t be detected by CMT because its limit of detection is about 450,000 cells per ml.

**Finding Strep:** Fortunately, BTSCC is an accurate screen for herd-wide intra-mammary infection with Streptococcus uberis. Having a BTSCC above 250,000 is an indicator that a high number of cows have intra-mammary infections, and Streptococcus and Staphylococcus are the major causes of elevated somatic cells.

Milk cultures confirm the presence of Streptococcus uberis. Culturing individual cows is expensive, and can be confusing since both Staphylococcus and Streptococcus are intermittently shed. However, repeated bulk tank and string milk cultures can reliably confirm the presence of Streptococcus uberis in a dairy herd.

**A Challenge to Treat:** Streptococcus uberis is often resistant to antibiotic treatment, and the cost of discarded milk is too high to make this a practical approach. Some dairies wait until dry-off, and use dry cow tubes to treat Streptococcus uberis. Unfortunately, we now know that some strains of Streptococcus uberis are so highly host-adapted to the cow’s mammary gland that they can persist despite both lactating and dry cow antibiotic treatments.

**A Risk to the Entire Herd:** Streptococcus uberis is highly contagious and spreads readily from cow to cow during milking; it is also capable of contaminating the environment and gaining access to the udder in that manner as well. Chasing after the high somatic cell cows with antibiotics each month is not feasible, and watching the BTSCC fluctuate as Streptococcus uberis spreads is frustrating.

**Vaccination Can Control Strep. Uberis and BTSCC:** Hygieia Biological Laboratories has developed Streptococcus Uberis Bacterin, a vaccine which provokes each cow’s immune system to fight off the infection. High herd immunity is the key to controlling this mastitis pathogen. Immune cows do not shed the organism, nor are they susceptible to new infection; BTSCC goes down.

**Strep-infected Cows = Significant Financial Consequences:** Production decreases as somatic cells increase. Conversely, lower somatic cells are correlated with increased production. Controlling Streptococcus mastitis thus leads to more milk, of a higher quality, and consequently, a larger milk check.

If your BTSCC is 250,000 or greater, check for Streptococcus uberis. If Streptococcus uberis is present, vaccinate with Streptococcus Uberis Bacterin.