



What is Lassa fever?

Lassa fever is a viral illness that typically occurs in West Africa.

How is Lassa fever spread?

The Lassa virus is transmitted to humans mainly through handling rats, food or household items contaminated by rats' urine and faeces.

The virus can spread between people through direct contact with the body fluids of a person infected with Lassa fever, as well as contaminated bedding and clothing.

You cannot get Lassa fever through hugging, shaking hands or sitting near someone.



What are the symptoms of Lassa fever?

Symptoms of Lassa fever typically occur 2-21 days after coming into contact with the virus. Many people who are infected do not show symptoms.

- Fever
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Chest and muscle pain
- Nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea
- Facial swelling
- In severe cases, bleeding from the mouth, nose, vagina or gastrointestinal tract

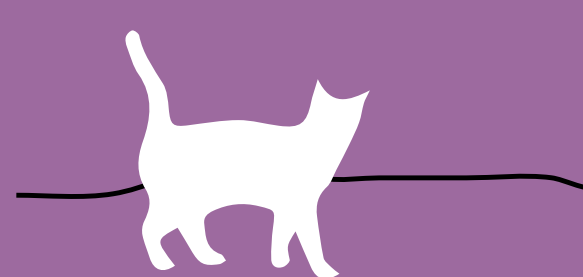
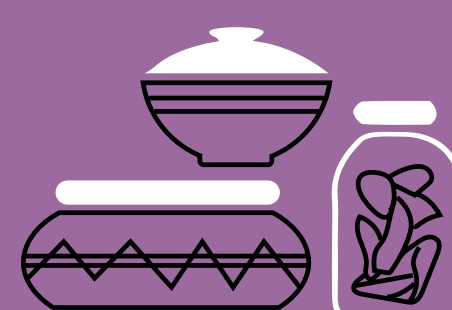


What do I do if I think I have Lassa fever?



1. Avoid contact with other people
2. Seek health advice immediately
3. Drink plenty of fluids
4. Ribavirin, an antiviral drug, can be an effective treatment if given early

How can I prevent getting infected with Lassa fever?



1. Wash your hands regularly
2. Store food in containers with lids
3. Keep your home clean and tidy to discourage rats from entering
4. Keep a cat
5. Cook all foods thoroughly

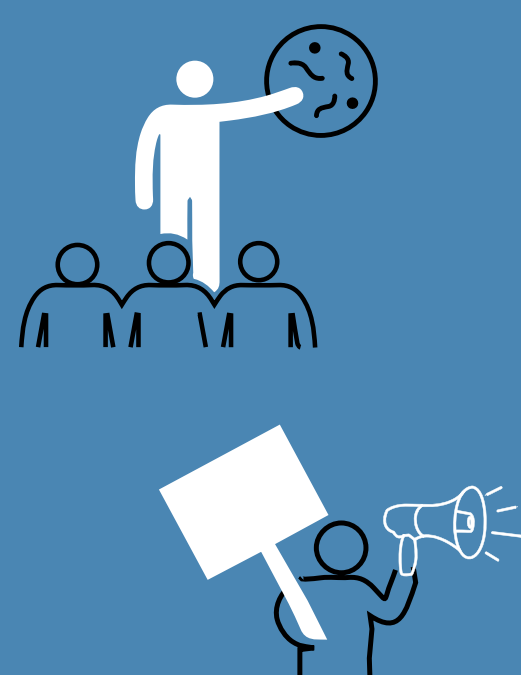
If I have Lassa fever, will I die?

Get medical treatment early. This will improve your chances of surviving.



WHO Response

WHO is supporting the Ministries of Health in the affected countries to contain the outbreak through:



- Finding new cases quickly so they can be isolated, treated and stop further spread
- Training health workers on Lassa fever to better diagnose and treat patients
- Procuring medical supplies and equipment
- Supporting public health education campaigns