



OUR REF: NCDC/HQ/ABJ/04/V.IV/43

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NEW PUBLIC ADVISORY ON LASSA FEVER

In line with our mandate, the NCDC continues to monitor the occurrence and trend of several diseases nationwide. These include Lassa Fever and other viral hemorrhagic fevers, Meningitis, Diphtheria, Cholera, Ebola, etc. This advisory is on Lassa Fever again and necessitated by the recent confirmed case with international travel to the UK. As always, this is the usual update by the organization.

Epidemiological Overview of Lassa fever in Nigeria

Lassa fever is an acute viral haemorrhagic fever (VHF) caused by the Lassa virus. The natural reservoir for the virus is the multimammate rat (also known as the African rat). Other rodents can also act as carriers of the virus.

Cases are recorded all year round with peak transmission periods within October to May every year. Cumulatively, as at Epi-week 9 (24th February to 2nd March 2025), **2728** suspected cases; **535** confirmed cases and unfortunately, **98** deaths have been recorded across 14 states in Nigeria (Case Fatality Rate 18.3%). Five (5) states account for 91% of confirmed cases: Ondo: 31%, Bauchi: 24%, Edo: 17%, Taraba: 16% and Ebonyi: 3%. Ten (10) LGAs make up 68% of confirmed cases, namely Owo, Akure South, Etsako West, Kirfi, Akoko South-West, Bali, Esan North-East, Bauchi, Toro and Jalingo.

Confirmed case with International Travel

On the 5th of March 2025, the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (NCDC) was notified of a confirmed case of Lassa fever by the Ondo State Ministry of Health, in a 31yr old physician managed at a private health facility in Ondo State after returning from a trip abroad (UK). The patient departed Nigeria 19/02/2025 and returned 27/02/2025. Samples were taken late on Friday, 28/02/2025 on a suspicion of Lassa fever, but the patient unfortunately passed away in the early hours of Saturday, 01/03/2025. The laboratory investigation returned a result was Lassa Fever positive on PCR on Tuesday 04/03/2025. The patient was said to have visited his fiancée in Edo state, as well as family and friends before traveling.

To enhance state and international level coordination of all control and management efforts, the following have been done and/or on-going:

- Ondo State Ministry of Health has bolstered control and management efforts through contact tracing and line listing of contacts of the confirmed case.
- All necessary in-country structures have been mobilized to ensure all possible contacts are traced and monitored.
- Port Health Services involvement in contact tracing and line listing of in-flight contacts to bolster surveillance efforts at the points of entry.
- Information shared with all relevant authorities in line with the International Health Regulations (2005), and contact tracing efforts also ongoing in the UK

In view of the above, it has become necessary again to make this advisory.

How is Lassa Fever Transmitted? - Through:

- Direct contact with urine, faeces, saliva or blood of infected rodents.
- Ingesting food and drinks contaminated with urine, faeces, saliva or blood of infected rats.
- Contact with objects, household items or surfaces contaminated with urine, faeces, saliva or blood of infected rats.
- Person-to-person transmission can also occur through contact with blood, urine, faeces, vomitus and other body fluids of an infected person, particularly in hospital environment where infection prevention and control practices are not optimal.

How Does it Present?

Lassa fever initially presents like other common illnesses accompanied by a fever, such as malaria. Other symptoms include headache, general body weakness, cough, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, muscle pains, chest pain, sore throat, and, in severe cases, **bleeding from ears, eyes, nose, mouth, and other body openings. Early presentations to ensure diagnosis and treatment of the diseases can greatly increase the chances of patient survival. Early reporting of symptoms helps ensure timely diagnosis and treatment, thereby improving the chances of patient survival.**

People Most At Risk For Lassa Fever Include:

- People of all age groups, who come in contact with the urine, faeces, saliva, or blood of infected rats.
- People living in rat-infested environments.
- People who consume potentially contaminated foodstuff, especially those left open overnight or dried outside in the open.
- People who handle or process rodents for consumption.
- People who do not perform hand hygiene at appropriate times.
- Caretakers of infected persons with poor infection prevention and control measures.
- Healthcare workers including:
 - Doctors, nurses, and other health workers who provide direct patient care in the absence of standard precautions.

- Hospital staff who clean and disinfect contaminated surfaces, materials, and supplies without adequate protective gear.
- Laboratory staff who handle blood samples of suspected Lassa fever patients without appropriate precautions.
- Persons who prepare and/or handle bodies of deceased Lassa fever cases without appropriate precautions.

Advice To the Public

Preventing the spread of Lassa fever and other infectious diseases is a collective responsibility. While the NCDC and the State governments are actively responding to these threats, every Nigerian has a crucial role to play in reducing the spread of this disease. Key actions to prevent the spread of Lassa Fever include:

Keep Your Environment Rodent-Free

- Regularly clean your homes, markets, and surroundings to eliminate conditions that encourage rat infestation or reduce breeding grounds for rats
- Store food items such as rice, garri, beans, and maize in sealed containers to prevent contamination.
- Block all holes in your house, including walls, floors, and roofs, to prevent rats and other rodents from entering homes.
- Cover your dustbins and properly dispose of refuse or waste to limit rodent access.
- Safely store food items such as rice, garri, beans, corn/maize, etc., in tightly sealed or well-covered containers and avoid open drying of food stuff outside or on roadsides, where it is at risk of contamination
- Properly process or prepare rats (bushmeat) before consumption
- Discourage bush burning and Deforestation as these can destroy the homes and food sources of rodents, driving them to migrate from the bushes to human residences to find food.
- Eliminate rats in homes and communities by setting rat traps and other appropriate and safe means.

Maintain Personal Hygiene & Safe Food Practices

- Wash hands frequently with soap and running water, especially after handling food or waste or using hand sanitizers when necessary
- Avoid overcrowded living areas as overcrowding leads to poor sanitation
- Avoid direct contact with body fluids or secretions from infected persons.

Seek Medical Attention Immediately

- Avoid self-medication and seek early medical attention if you experience symptoms such as fever, headache, body weakness, sore throat, or bleeding.

- Call the NCDC's toll-free number 6232 or your State Ministry of Health hotline to report any suspected cases.

For Healthcare Workers

- Remain vigilant and adhere to strict infection prevention and control (IPC) protocols.
- Always practice standard IPC measures, including proper hand hygiene, PPE use, and safe waste disposal.
- Be on high alert for suspected Lassa fever cases and refer patients promptly for laboratory testing and case management.
- Ensure strict isolation precautions for confirmed cases to prevent further transmission within healthcare facilities.
- Please report all suspected cases of Lassa fever to your Local Government Area Disease Surveillance and Notification Officer (DSNO). They are the first link to response and care for Lassa fever cases in Nigeria.

Contact

NCDC Toll-free Number: 6232 | SMS: 08099555577 | WhatsApp: 07087110839 | Twitter: @NCDCGov | Facebook: @NCDCgov | Instagram: @NCDCgov | NCDC Media Releases

Signed:



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