

Viral Hemorrhagic Fever

Fact Sheet

What is VHF and can it spread from person to person?

VHF is a serious illness caused by a virus. Many different viruses can cause VHF. Examples of viruses that cause VHF include Ebola, Marburg, and Lassa viruses.

Some of the viruses that cause VHF can spread from person to person through direct contact with blood or other body fluids (e.g., saliva or urine). Some can also be spread by contaminated objects, such as the bedding of a sick person.

Some forms of VHF occur naturally throughout the world. These can be passed to people through infected animals, such as livestock, rodents, or insects.

Every year, several cases of VHF occur outside the United States. However, natural cases do not occur in the United States unless brought in by an infected traveler or released on purpose.

What are the symptoms of VHFs?

Depending on the type of virus, symptoms of VHF may differ. However, they can cause fever, headache, sore throat, muscle aches, abdominal pain, vomiting, diarrhea, and, in the most severe cases, bleeding, shock, and multi-organ failure.

Although many of the initial symptoms are similar to the flu or other viral illnesses, VHFs can be far more serious. Take extra precautions because of the reports of VHFs in the xxx area.

How are VHFs treated?

A VHF can be a life-threatening illness. However, medical treatment can control symptoms and save lives.

Treatment may include supportive care, such as balancing the patient's fluids and electrolytes and maintaining their oxygen status and blood pressure. Secondary bacterial infections may be treated with antibiotics.

For many VHFs, specific treatments against the viruses that cause them do not exist.

What to do if you have symptoms of VHFs?

If you become ill with fever or develop other symptoms, such as chills, muscle aches, nausea, vomiting, or rash, visit a health-care provider immediately. Tell the provider about your symptoms before going to the office or emergency room so arrangements can be made to prevent transmission to others in the healthcare setting.

Until you can get medical help and what illness you have can be, stay away from others to avoid spreading the disease to them.

People with symptoms of a possible VHF, including fever, should stay home and avoid contact with other household members until they are evaluated by a healthcare provider

If you have any questions, please contact Allen County Public Health at 419-228-4457. Health Department staff members are available to answer your questions Monday to Friday from 8:00a.m. to 4:30 p.m. You can also visit www.allencountypublichealth.org and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Web site at www.bt.cdc.gov for additional information.

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In addition, take these steps:

1. Keep your hands clean by washing them with soap and water or using an alcohol-based hand gel.
2. Be prepared for possible nausea and vomiting. Have a large heavy duty plastic bag or a basin nearby.
3. Avoid taking any aspirin or ibuprofen (including brand name drugs like Motrin, Advil, Nuprin, etc.). You can use acetaminophen according to the label instructions.

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