



LASSA FEVER FACT SHEET

WHAT IS LASSA FEVER?

Lassa fever is a viral illness that occurs in west Africa.

HOW DO YOU GET LASSA FEVER?

Lassa Fever is spread by a type of rat in West Africa. The rodent carries the virus in their urine and droppings and live in homes and areas where food is stored. People can get Lassa fever through:

- Contact with the urine or droppings of an infected rat
- Catching and preparing infected rats as food
- Inhaling tiny particles in the air contaminated with infected rat urine or droppings
- Rarely, direct contact (via your eyes, nose, or mouth) with an infected person's blood or bodily fluids

SYMPTOMS

Symptoms of Lassa fever typically occur 1-3 weeks after a person comes into contact with the virus. For many people, symptoms are mild and may include:

- Slight fever
- Weakness
- Headache

In some people, the disease may become more severe and may include symptoms such as:

- Hemorrhaging
- Respiratory distress
- Repeated vomiting
- Pain in chest, back, and abdomen
- Shock

TREATMENT

Lassa Fever is treated with an antiviral drug. Discuss treatment options with your doctor.

PREVENTION

- Avoid contact with Mastomys rodents and do not use as a food source.
- Put food away in rodent-proof containers and discourage rodents from entering the home.
- Trap rats in and around homes to reduce rat population.
- Wear protective clothing such as masks, gloves, gowns and goggles around infected individuals.

DGHD EFFORTS:

Reports of suspected and confirmed cases of disease are made to the Delaware General Health District. The Health District investigates potential sources of illness, conducts surveillance for the spread of disease, and engages in community outreach and education.