



Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever (CCHF): information sheet for category 1 contacts

You have been given this information sheet because you have been in possible contact with Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever (CCHF). As your exposure has been assessed as very low risk, it is very unlikely that you have caught CCHF, and you can continue your usual activities. However, as a precaution, if you feel unwell with a fever (temperature of 37.5°C or higher) or other symptoms suggestive of CCHF within 14 days of your last possible exposure to CCHF, call NHS 111 and tell them that you have been in possible contact with CCHF.

About CCHF

CCHF is a rare but serious disease caused by CCHF virus. CCHF is found across much of Africa, Central and Eastern Asia and Southern Europe. It is not normally found in the UK but has occasionally been found in patients who have caught it abroad and come to the UK.

How CCHF spreads

CCHF can spread by:

- direct contact with the organs, blood, secretions, or other bodily fluids of an infected person (including sexual transmission)
- contact with objects, such as needles or soiled clothing, that have been contaminated with infected secretions
- bites from infected ticks, or direct handling of infected ticks or livestock in affected countries

CCHF is not spread through routine, social contact (such as shaking hands or sitting next to someone) with people who do not have symptoms. There is no evidence that CCHF can spread through the air.

It can take up to 14 days from when someone is exposed to the virus for symptoms to appear.

Symptoms of CCHF

It is possible for someone who has caught the CCHF virus to have no symptoms of infection, or only mild symptoms. However, CCHF can also cause severe symptoms and death. Early symptoms of CCHF are often mild and non-specific and include fever, muscle aches, dizziness, backache or headache. Nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea and abdominal pain may

also occur.

In more severe cases, symptoms may progress to bruising and/or bleeding. Multi-organ failure may develop in the most severe cases. Approximately 30% of clinically ill cases are fatal.

Preventing and treating CCHF

There is currently no licensed vaccine for CCHF. To avoid CCHF spreading between people, those caring for individuals with possible or suspected CCHF should avoid contact with the patient's bodily fluids and should wear personal protective equipment (PPE).

Treatment for CCHF is with supportive care, including balancing fluids and electrolytes, maintaining a person's oxygen status and blood pressure, and treating any co-infections. There are antiviral drugs which, if used early on after the start of symptoms may make the illness less serious for anyone infected. They do not prevent the illness altogether.

Your risk of developing CCHF

You are not considered to be at risk of having caught CCHF. This is because although you have had contact with someone known to have CCHF, their bodily fluids, or potentially infectious materials, you have reported that **you have not**:

- been in **close (less than 2 metres) or direct contact** with someone known to have CCHF **without** appropriate PPE, while they had symptoms
- been in **direct contact** with the body fluids (or items contaminated with body fluids, such as bedding) from someone known to have CCHF while they had symptoms, **without** appropriate PPE
- been in **direct contact** with the body of someone who died who was known to have CCHF, **without** appropriate PPE

Your family and household contacts are not at risk of catching CCHF from you. There are no restrictions on your activities, and there are no monitoring or reporting requirements.

What to do if you become ill

It is extremely unlikely that you have caught CCHF. However, if you feel unwell with any of the symptoms of CCHF as listed above within 14 days of your possible contact with CCHF, **stay at home**. Take your temperature if you have a thermometer available. It is important to take your temperature before you take any medicines such as paracetamol, ibuprofen or aspirin, as these can reduce your temperature.

After taking your temperature, call NHS 111 and tell them that you have had possible contact with CCHF. Let them know if your temperature is 37.5°C or higher. They will arrange for you to be assessed by an appropriate clinician.

In an emergency, you should call 999 and tell them about your symptoms and that you have had possible contact with CCHF.

Further information

More information about CCHF can be found on the following website:

UK Health Security Agency: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/crimean-congo-haemorrhagic-fever-origins-reservoirs-transmission-and-guidelines>