



Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever (CCHF): information sheet for category 2 contacts

You have been given this information sheet because you have had contact with someone with Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever (CCHF), or material contaminated with CCHF virus. You should follow the advice in this information sheet and check yourself for symptoms for 14 days after you had possible contact with CCHF. If you develop symptoms of CCHF within 14 days of your last exposure to CCHF, you should stay at home and call your designated contact immediately.

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 diagnosed 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 reported that:

- you had direct or close contact with someone with CCHF, or their body fluids, outside of a designated high level isolation unit, but you were wearing appropriate PPE

OR

- you were in an environment contaminated with the body fluids of someone who had CCHF, but you were wearing appropriate PPE

OR

- you have had contact with CCHF in a laboratory which did not meet containment level 4 requirements, but followed usual laboratory practice and you were wearing appropriate PPE

We would like to monitor you for a period of 14 days from when you were last exposed to CCHF. This will mean that we can act quickly in the unlikely event that you develop symptoms, reducing the risks to you and to others close to you.

What you need to do

Your family and household contacts are not at risk of catching CCHF from you if you do not have any symptoms.

You should take the following actions for 14 days from when you were last exposed to CCHF:

- record your temperature and monitor yourself for other symptoms of CCHF (as listed above) **twice per day at the same times each day**
- report to your designated contact (see below for their details) if you develop a temperature of **37.5°C or higher**, or other symptoms of CCHF, so that they can

arrange for you to be assessed. They will explain the local arrangements for accessing healthcare

- there are no restrictions on work, travel or social activities as long as you have no symptoms
- do not share towels, bed linen, toothbrushes or razors
- use barrier contraception or avoid unprotected sexual contact with other people
- postpone any non-essential medical or dental treatment including vaccination. If you need essential medical or dental treatment, inform your healthcare provider about your possible contact with CCHF

Use of medicines such as aspirin, paracetamol or ibuprofen

Certain medicines, such as paracetamol, ibuprofen and aspirin, can reduce your body temperature during a fever (antipyretic) for up to 8 hours. Thermometer measurements may therefore show a lower temperature than would be expected for up to 8 hours after taking an antipyretic.

You must call your designated contact for further advice if you need to take an antipyretic medicine.

Please take your temperature before you take paracetamol, ibuprofen or aspirin. If your temperature is 37.5°C or higher, you must call your contact immediately.

A temperature of 37.5°C or higher is always significant, whether you are taking one of these medicines or not, and must be reported urgently.

What to do if you become ill

It is unlikely that you have caught CCHF. However, if you are feeling unwell or develop any of the symptoms of CCHF (including a temperature of **37.5°C or higher**) within 14 days from when you had contact with CCHF, please **stay at home**. Take your temperature if you have not done this already. **Phone your designated contact immediately** (see below for details), who 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 possible contact with CCHF.

Your designated contact number is –
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Further information

More information about CCHF can be found on the UK Health Security Agency website: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/crimean-congo-haemorrhagic-fever-origins-reservoirs-transmission-and-guidelines>