



Bolivian haemorrhagic fever – Machupo virus: information sheet for category 1 contacts

You have been given this information sheet because you have been in possible contact with Machupo virus, a virus that causes a disease called Bolivian haemorrhagic fever, or material contaminated with Machupo virus. As your exposure has been assessed as very low risk, it is very unlikely that you have caught Machupo virus, 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 Bolivian haemorrhagic fever within 21 days of your last possible exposure to Machupo virus, call NHS 111 and tell them that you have been in possible contact with Machupo virus.

About Machupo virus

Machupo virus was first identified in the North-Eastern lowlands of Bolivia. Outbreaks and cases of Machupo virus have been reported from Bolivia. There is no evidence of the virus originating from countries outside Bolivia.

How Machupo virus spreads

Machupo virus can spread by:

- direct contact with the organs, the blood, secretions or other body fluids of an infected person (for example their vomit, faeces, urine, saliva, or semen)
- contact with objects, such as needles or soiled clothing, that have been contaminated with infected bodily fluids
- contact with infected rodents

Machupo virus is not spread through routine, social contact (such as shaking hands or sitting next to someone) with people who do not have symptoms.

It can take up to 21 days from when someone is exposed to the virus for symptoms to appear.

Symptoms of Bolivian haemorrhagic fever

The illness can begin with symptoms including:

- feeling unwell
- chills

- fever (temperature above 37.5°C)
- headache
- loss of appetite
- generalised aches and pains in muscles

A few days later symptoms can include:

- pain behind the eyes
- nausea
- vomiting
- abdominal pain
- constipation or mild diarrhoea.
- seizures
- confusion
- coma

Some patients with severe illness may develop internal and external bleeding.

Preventing and treating infection with Bolivian haemorrhagic fever

There are currently no licensed vaccines or specific antivirals to treat infection with Machupo virus.

To avoid Machupo virus spreading between people, those caring for individuals with possible or suspected Bolivian haemorrhagic fever should avoid contact with the patient's bodily fluids and should wear personal protective equipment (PPE).

Treatment for Bolivian haemorrhagic fever is with supportive care including maintaining good fluid and electrolyte balance, and managing diarrhoea, vomiting, fever and pain with medications and blood transfusions as required. Supportive therapy can also include maintaining the patient's oxygen status and blood pressure and treating any other infections they may have at the same time. Supportive care can improve survival, particularly if started early.

Your risk of developing Bolivian haemorrhagic fever

You are not considered to be at risk of having caught Machupo virus. This is because although you have had contact with someone known to have Bolivian haemorrhagic fever, 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 Bolivian haemorrhagic fever **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 Bolivian haemorrhagic fever while they had symptoms, **without** appropriate PPE
- been in **direct contact** with the body of someone who died who was known to have Bolivian haemorrhagic fever, **without** appropriate PPE

Your family and household contacts are not at risk of catching Machupo virus 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 Machupo virus. However, if you feel unwell with any of the symptoms of Bolivian haemorrhagic fever as listed above within 21 days of your possible contact with Machupo virus, 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 Machupo virus. 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 Machupo virus.

Your designated contact number is – Delete this text and type number

Further information

More information about Machupo virus can be found at:

- Haemorrhagic fevers in Bolivia: origins, reservoirs, transmission and guidelines (www.gov.uk/guidance/haemorrhagic-fevers-in-bolivia-origins-reservoirs-transmission-and-guidelines)

Document information

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