



Bolivian haemorrhagic fever – Machupo virus: information sheet for category 3 contacts

You have been given this information sheet because you have been in possible contact with Machupo virus, or material contaminated with Machupo virus. Machupo virus causes a disease called Bolivian haemorrhagic fever. You should follow the advice in this information sheet and check yourself for symptoms for 21 days after your last possible contact with Machupo virus. If you develop symptoms of Bolivian haemorrhagic fever within 21 days of your last exposure to Machupo virus, you should stay at home and call your designated contact immediately.

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 reported that you were in the same room as, and within 2 metres of, someone who had Bolivian haemorrhagic fever, but you did not have direct contact with them, their body fluids or objects that they may have contaminated.

We would like to monitor you for a period of 21 days from when you were last exposed to Machupo virus. 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 Machupo virus from you if you do not have any symptoms.

You should take the following actions for 21 days from when you were last exposed to Machupo virus:

- record your temperature and monitor yourself for other symptoms suggestive of Bolivian haemorrhagic fever (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 suggestive of Bolivian haemorrhagic fever, 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 as a precaution
- use barrier contraception or avoid unprotected sexual contact with other people as a precaution
- 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 Machupo virus

If you are a healthcare worker, you should tell your line manager that you have been identified as a contact of Machupo virus, but that you are still able to attend work as long as you remain asymptomatic.

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 Machupo virus. However, if you are feeling unwell or develop any of the symptoms of Bolivian haemorrhagic fever (including a temperature of **37.5°C or higher**) within 21 days from when you had contact with Machupo virus, 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 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

Version 1.0. March 2026