



Argentine haemorrhagic fever: information sheet for category 1 contacts

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

About Argentine haemorrhagic fever

Argentine haemorrhagic fever is a rare but serious disease caused by Junin virus. Outbreaks and cases of Argentine haemorrhagic fever have been reported mainly from the low grassland areas known as the Pampas region of Argentina. Cases are rarely reported outside this region of Argentina.

How Junin virus spreads

Junin 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

Junin 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 Argentine 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

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

Preventing and treating Argentine haemorrhagic fever

Junin vaccine is recommended for people who may be exposed to the Junin virus in Argentina because of occupational (agricultural or laboratory) exposure. The vaccine which is licensed in Argentina is routinely used in Argentina to protect against Argentine haemorrhagic fever.

To avoid Junin virus spreading between people, those caring for individuals with possible or suspected Argentine haemorrhagic fever should avoid contact with patients' blood and bodily fluids, and they should wear personal protective equipment (PPE).

Treatment for Argentine 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 Argentine haemorrhagic fever

You are not considered to be at risk of having caught Junin virus. This is because although you have had contact with someone known to have Argentine 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 Argentine 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 Argentine 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 Argentine haemorrhagic fever, **without** appropriate PPE

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

<p>Your designated contact number is – Delete this text and type number</p>

Further information

You can find more information about Argentine haemorrhagic fever at:

- Argentine Haemorrhagic fever: origins, reservoirs, transmission and guidelines (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/argentine-haemorrhagic-fever-origins-reservoirs-transmission-and-guidelines>)

Document information

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