

WHAT IS VHF?

Viral Hemorrhagic Fevers (VHFs) are a large group of viruses including Ebola and yellow fever. VHFs are characterized by fever, weakness and bleeding. All VHFs attack blood vessels, but can cause many different organ systems to fail. VHFs are highly infectious if airborne, but are relatively rare in the United State.

TREATMENT

Patients can receive supportive therapy, but generally, there is no other treatment or established cure for VHFs after infection. However, antiviral drugs have been successful in treating some VHFs. Vaccines for yellow fever and Argentine hemorrhagic fever have been developed, and experimental vaccines are being studies for other VHFs.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How do people become infected with VHFs?

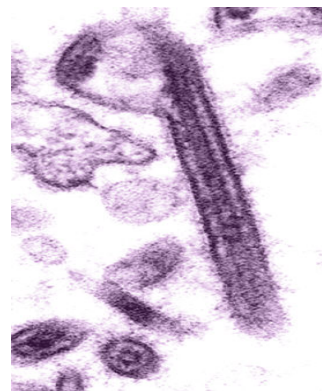
They are initially transmitted to humans from infected rodents, mosquitoes and ticks. Humans can be infected through contact with urine, feces, or saliva from infected rodents, or bites from ticks or mosquitoes.

Are VHFs contagious?

Ebola, Marburg, Lassa and machupo VHF's have been known to be transmitted from person-to-person through close contact.

Are there vaccines for VHFs?

Yellow fever and argentine hemorrhagic fever have vaccines available. However, no other vaccines exist to help protect against the remainder of these diseases.



SYMPTOMS

VHFs are caused by a large group of viruses. Typically, symptoms appear within 3 to 5 days, with a range of 1 to 14 days. Although the specific time between exposure and illness can be slightly different with each case, all VHFs will have common symptoms, including:

- ∂ Flu-like symptoms such as fever, fatigue, weakness, sweating and muscle aches
- ∂ Problems with blood vessels, which can cause bruising and bleeding under the skin and/or from eyes and mouth

Severely ill patients may show low blood pressure, shock seizures and even coma. VHF agents can lead to multi-system organ failure, resulting in death.

Flu-like symptoms are common to many diseases and usually mean that you simply have the flue. However, if symptoms progress, contact a doctor who can determine a course of action to evaluate

If I am exposed to a VHF, will I die?

Overall, 5-15% of people infected with severe strains of VHFs have died. However, in some cases without antibiotic treatment, the mortality rate has been higher.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

Denton Department of State Health Services
<http://www.dshs.state.tx.us>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
<http://www.cdc.gov>