

# Health & Safety Alert 001

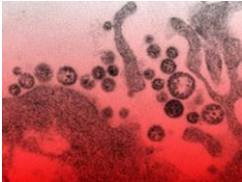


## LASSA FEVER



Many lives have been lost as a result of the outbreak of Lassa fever since 1969 when it was discovered in Lassa, Borno State, Nigeria.

### What is Lassa Fever?



Lassa fever is a viral hemorrhagic (bleeding) illness associated with persistent high fever and caused by Lassa virus, a zoonotic virus, transmitted when a human comes into contact with an infected rat's feces, urine, or the bodily fluids of an infected human



The natural host of Lassa virus is a rodent known as the "multimammate rat" of the genus *Mastomys* (usually rat with hairless tail) which often lives in and around homes and scavenges on human food remains or poorly stored food.



Between 1-3 weeks after the patient comes into contact with the virus, the signs and symptoms of Lassa fever typically begin.

These include fever, pain behind the chest wall, sore throat, back pain, cough, abdominal pain, vomiting, diarrhea, conjunctivitis, facial swelling, proteinuria (protein in the urine), and mucosal bleeding.

### 7 PREVENTION STRATEGIES

- Store your food properly in rodent-proof containers
- Avoid foods (including beverages) from unknown sources and wash canned foods and drinks before usage
- Block all rat hideouts and discourage rats from entering your homes and do not spread food where rats can have access to it
- Cover all food and water properly. Cook foods thoroughly
- Destroy rodents with appropriate methods like fumigation and safely dispose their carcasses
- Keep your Environment clean. Collect and dispose your waste properly
- Keep pets like cats in the house.



Remember, as soon as you suspect Lassa fever, or you have persistent fever not responding to the standard treatment for malaria and typhoid, report to the nearest Health facility

**Your health is your greatest asset, so make it last.**