LASSA FEVER PREVENTION AND CONTROL:
WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW!

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What is Lassa Fever?

• Lassa fever is an acute viral haemorrhagic (this means it causes bleeding) illness.
• The illness was first discovered in 1969 when two missionary nurses died in Nigeria, West Africa.
• The cause of the illness was found to be Lassa virus, named after the town in Borno state Nigeria where the first cases originated.
• Endemic in West Africa and occurs more often during dry season.
What Is The Current Situation?

• Endemic in West Africa

• Current outbreak in Nigeria started in August 2015

• So far up to 212 confirmed cases with 76 deaths in 19 states in the country representing the highest fatality in 5 years.

• FCT, Lagos, Bauchi, Edo, Rivers, Taraba, Nasarawa, Niger, Oyo, Gombe, Ekiti, Ondo

• In Rivers State as at 17th January there have been 10 suspected cases, 3 confirmed cases, 3 deaths
What Is The Current Situation?

**DATA**

**CASES & DEATHS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Cases</th>
<th>Deaths</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>1250</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
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<td>198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>1310</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>978</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**2016: Status**

- **Cases:** 81
- **Deaths:** 35

**2016**

- **36.5%**

**2011-2015 Average**

- **4%**

vs

**Deaths**
How Is Lassa Fever Transmitted?

• Transmitted to humans via contact with food or household items contaminated with rodent (rat) urine or faeces.

• The carrier of the virus is the Mastomys rat commonly known as the “multimammate (having many breasts) rat.”

• Mastomys rats infected with Lassa virus do not become ill, but they can shed the virus in their urine and faeces.

• It can also be transmitted from one person to another through contact.
What Are The Signs And Symptoms?

• The incubation period of Lassa fever (time between infection and symptoms) ranges from 6-21 days.

• About 80% of people who become infected with Lassa virus have no symptoms.

• One in five infections result in severe disease, where the virus affects several organs such as the liver, spleen and kidneys.
What Are The Signs And Symptoms?

• Early: Fever, general weakness, and malaise (feeling unwell).

• Advanced: headache, sore throat, muscle pain, chest pain, nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, cough, and abdominal pain.

• Severe cases: facial swelling, fluid in the lung cavity, bleeding from the mouth, nose, vagina or gastrointestinal tract and low blood pressure.

• Death
Is There Treatment?

• The good news is that there is drug treatment and if started early survival is possible.

• Supportive treatment is also critical

• There is however no vaccine at the present though research is on-going
How Can It Be Prevented?

Because Mastomys are so abundant in endemic areas, it is not possible to completely eliminate them from the environment. Simple steps to limit access of rats to our homes include:

- Blocking all possible entry points for rats
- Storing grain (garri, rice, beans etc) and other foodstuffs in rat-proof containers
- Disposing of garbage far from the home and using covered dust-bins
- Maintaining clean households
Discourage rats from entering homes.

1. Block all possible holes and check them regularly to ensure they remain blocked.
2. Seal up spaces under doors or in between windows.
3. Don’t leave food items open. Don’t give rats access to food.
4. Don’t leave dustbins open in the house or compound.
5. Set rat traps instead of using rat poison.
Store food in rat proof containers

Garri sold in open market

Grains properly stored in rat proof containers
Wash fruits and vegetables properly before consumption

Cooking raw foods well before consumption

Wash the cover of canned drinks before consumption
Frequent Hand washing must become a habit for all members of the family.
Family members should always be careful to avoid contact with blood and body fluids while caring for sick persons.
For Health Care Workers

• In health-care settings, staff should always apply standard infection prevention and control precautions when caring for patients, regardless of their presumed diagnosis.

• These include basic hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene, use of personal protective equipment (to block splashes or other contact with infected materials), safe injection practices and safe burial practices.
Report/suspicions should be properly channeled

Help Lines Rivers State Ministry of Health

In case of suspicions/reports

• 08056109538
• 080167733939
• http://www.lassaalert.org
This is a war we can win...
The change starts with us...
Let's take our health in our hands...

NO MORE LASSA!!!