

# **MEDICAL ALERT**

## **Medical Case NO 1. Rift Valley Fever**

### **Rift Valley Fever kills 2 in Arusha 2007-02-06 09:06:36**

The deadly Rift Valley fever has erupted in Arusha and claimed two lives within two weeks, the acting regional commissioner, Evance Balama, said yesterday. The two victims, who were scientifically diagnosed by the Nairobi based Center for Disease control (CDC) as having died of RVF on January 31, 2007, were residents of Monduli and Arusha.

They died at Mount Meru Hospital after consuming slaughtered goat meat at Terat Village,` Balama said, `we had to send their specimen to Nairobi to confirm whether they had died of RVF.` The CDC results confirmed that the two Tanzanians really died of RVF. As concern grows regarding the outbreak of the deadly RVF in Arusha, Balama has warned against consumption of raw milk, wildlife meat and domestic animals.

READ MORE ABOUT IT...

RIFT VALLEY FEVER (RVF)

WHAT IS RIFT VALLEY FEVER?

Rift Valley Fever is a disease which primarily affects animals, but occasionally causes disease in humans. It may cause disease in both animals and humans leading to a lot of deaths.

WHAT CAUSES RIFT VALLEY FEVER?

This is caused by a virus which was first isolated in 1930 in the Rift Valley of Kenya.

HOW IS IT TRANSMITTED AMONG ANIMALS?

RVF virus is primarily spread amongst animals by the bite of infected mosquitoes. Many types of animals may be infected with RVF, including cattle, sheep, camels and goats.

HOW IS IT TRANSMITTED FROM ANIMALS TO HUMANS?

1. Direct contact with infected animals or infected products e.g. blood, milk, meat etc.
2. Through the bites of mosquitoes which may have fed on infected animals. (Many different species of mosquitoes e.g. Aedes, Culex, even Anopheles are vectors for the RVF virus).

IS THERE A POSSIBILITY OF EPIDEMICS OF THE DISEASE?

Yes, as is happening now in North Eastern Province, and can happen in other areas following the introduction of the virus where these vectors are present.

HOW MANY PEOPLE HAVE BEEN AFFECTED IN THIS CURRENT OUTBREAK SO FAR?

By 5th January 2007, the reported cases are 188 with 68 deaths, in the districts of Garissa, Tana River, Wajir, Kilifi and Ijara.

DO PEOPLE GET SICK IMMEDIATELY THEY ARE BITTEN BY THE MOSQUITOES?

No, it may take 2-6 days before they start showing signs/symptoms of the disease.

## **WHAT ARE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF THE DISEASE?**

***This may include: -***

***sudden onset high body temperature (fever)***

***headache***

***muscle pain***

***backache***

***vomiting***

In severe cases, one may get;

eye disease

meningitis (meningo-encephalitis) inflammation of the brain and surrounding tissue

bleeding tendencies (such as vomiting blood, passing blood in the faeces, bleeding in the skin and bleeding from the gums).

## **HOW DO WE DIAGNOSE THE DISEASE?**

Clinical presentation

Blood tests are used for confirmation.

## **HOW DO WE TREAT THE PATIENTS?**

The mainstay of treatment is general supportive therapy.

## **HOW DO WE PREVENT AND CONTROL THIS DISEASE?**

Avoiding contact with blood, body fluid or tissue of infected animals.

Use of insecticide treated nets and mosquito repellent to reduce contact with mosquitoes.

Indoor spraying with insecticides.

RVF can be prevented by a sustained program of animal vaccination.

## **WHAT HAS THE GOVERNMENT DONE SO FAR TO TACKLE THIS DISEASE?**

1. Distribution of over 100,000 insecticide treated nets is ongoing in North Eastern Province.
2. Wide-scale insecticide spraying in affected area to reduce the increasing mosquito population following the recent floods.
3. Supportive drugs and other medical supplies have been distributed to the affected district for management of suspected cases.
4. Health educations on early recognition of the disease as well as its prevention and control measures have been stepped up.
5. Additional health and veterinary officers have been mobilized and are on the ground helping in the control efforts.
6. The vaccines for animal vaccination are available in the country, and an animal vaccination programme will be on as from 8th January 2007.
7. Quarantine for animal movement has been imposed in North Eastern Province.
8. Home slaughtering of animals for the coming Muslim festival has been banned, and they can only slaughter at abattoirs where they can be inspected under strict hygienic conditions.

## **CASE DEFINITIONS FOR SUSPECTED RIFT VALLEY FEVER " DRAFT 2**

### **Suspected Case**

Any person presenting with fever of acute onset (>37.50C) with any of the following symptoms:-

Headache, muscle and joint pains In a patient where other causes of acute febrile illness such as malaria have not been identified as a cause since 1st December 2006.

## Probable Case

Any person presenting with fever of acute onset ( $>37.50^{\circ}\text{C}$ ) with unexplained bleeding tendencies (bloody stool, vomiting blood, coughing blood, bleeding from gums, nose, vagina, skin or eyes) or deterioration of vision or decreased consciousness.

## Confirmed Case

A suspected or probable case with Laboratory confirmation of Rift Valley Fever by ELISA (anti-RVVFV IgM) or PCR

# **Medical case NO 2. Chikungunya**

## **What is Chikungunya?**

Chikungunya is a disease caused by a mosquito-borne virus. The vector mosquito is a day-biter called 'Aedes Albopictus'.

## **2. How is Chikungunya transmitted?**

The disease is transmitted during the day, when the mosquito bites someone infected by Chikungunya and then contaminates other persons who are bitten in turn.

## **3. Is human to human transmission possible in the disease?**

No there is no direct transmission. A person who is infected by Chikungunya is not contagious.

## **4. What are the signs and symptoms for the disease?**

*The symptoms generally appear 4 to 7 days after having been bitten by the mosquito. They are:*

- High fever that can go up to  $39^{\circ}\text{C}$ .*
- Muscular and joints; pain, mainly affecting the extremities of limbs.*
- Swelling.*
- Skin manifestations.*
- Headache.*

## **5. Is there any treatment for the disease?**

There exists neither a vaccine nor a specific treatment against Chikungunya for the time being. The only treatment is to take medicine to soothe symptoms such as fever and pain.

## **6. How to prevent Chikungunya?**

Prevention is possible by controlling proliferation of mosquitoes in stagnant water. You need to avoid water retention by:

- Eliminating any still water found on roofs
- Seeing to it that water pipes are not clogged
- Properly covering all water tanks so that mosquitoes cannot get in
- Getting rid of any container capable of retaining water in your outdoor surroundings (used tyres, food cans, garbage, saucers under flower pots, etc)
- Renew water in flower vases at least once a week

## **Other precautions:**

- Wear clothes that suitably cover arms and legs
- Make use of mosquito nets
- Use mosquito repellent products (coils, sprays, topical lotions and creams)

## **7. What should be done in case of manifestation of symptoms?**

Head straight to your nearest Health Centre