

In case of reply the number and the date of this letter should be quoted.

OUR CORE VALUES

- People-Centered
- Professionalism
- Team work
- Innovation
- Discipline
- Integrity



Ghana Health Service
Private Mail Bag
Ministries Post Office
Accra, Ghana

GPS Address: GA-143-4609

TEL: +233 302 662 014

FAX: +233 302 666 808

My Ref. No.:GHS/DG/LF/25.02.23

Your Ref. No.

26th February, 2023.

TO ALL MEDIA HOUSES

PRESS RELEASE

TWO CONFIRMED LASSA FEVER CASES IN GHANA

The Ghana Health Service received notification of two confirmed Lassa fever cases from the Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research on 24th February, 2023. Both cases reside in Accra. The first case was a 40-year-old trader, who was unwell for a period of about two weeks and finally died at the Korle-Bu Teaching Hospital. The second case, who is a contact of the fatal case, is currently on admission but is very stable. So far, 56 contacts have been identified and are being followed up.

Lassa fever (a viral hemorrhagic fever) is endemic in Benin, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Sierra Leone, and Nigeria. Ghana recorded its first case in 2011.

Following the notification, the underlisted public health measures have been undertaken.

- Public Health Emergency Management committees at all levels (National, Regions and Districts) have been activated.
- Detailed investigation including environmental assessment has started.
- Essential medications and logistics including Personal Protecting Equipment (PPE) are being mobilized.
- Contact tracing and management are on-going.
- Quarantine of contacts has been instituted and daily follow up by health staff is ongoing.
- Strict Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) with barrier nursing has been instituted.
- Sensitization of health staff on Lassa fever has started.
- Community sensitization and education on Lassa fever are ongoing.

BRIEF FACTS ABOUT LASSA FEVER

- Lassa fever is caused by Lassa virus and the incubation period is 2-21 days.
- The virus is transmitted to humans through contact with food or household items contaminated with rodent (Rats, Mice) urine or faeces.
- Lassa virus may also be spread between humans through direct contact with the blood, urine, faeces, or other bodily fluids of a person infected with Lassa fever. Sexual transmission of Lassa virus has been reported.

Symptoms of Lassa fever

The early symptoms of Lassa fever may include **fever** and **general weakness**.

Persons may later present with headache, sore throat, muscle pain, chest pain, nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, cough, and abdominal pain.

In severe cases, there maybe bleeding from the mouth, nose, vagina or stomach. Death usually occurs within 14 days of onset in fatal cases.

Treatment and prophylaxis

There is medicine (antiviral) for treatment and much effective if taken early. There is currently no vaccine that protects against Lassa fever.

Prevention and control

Prevention relies on promoting community hygiene to discourage rodents from entering our homes. Effective measures include storing grain and other foodstuffs in rodent-proof containers, disposing of garbage far from the home, maintaining clean households and keeping cats.

Let us also avoid contact with blood and body fluids while caring for sick persons.

The Ministry of Health and Ghana Health Service, in collaboration with our partners, wishes to assure the general public that all efforts are being made to contain this outbreak and prevent further spread of the virus.

SIGNED

DR PATRICK KUMA-ABOAGYE

DIRECTOR GENERAL

END