



What

CCHF is caused by the tick-borne Nairovirus. The virus is primarily transmitted by Hyalomma ticks, through direct contact with the blood or bodily fluids of infected animals or humans, and occasionally from mother to child. Early tick stages feed on animals like rodents, hares, hedgehogs, and ground-dwelling birds, where the virus can multiply. Infected adult ticks typically feed on livestock such as sheep, goats, cattle, and pigs but may also transmit the virus to humans.

Who

People working or traveling near livestock are at higher risk of exposure to infected ticks or animal blood, which may lead to transmission of the virus that causes Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever (CCHF). High-risk groups include agricultural workers, slaughterhouse employees, hunters, campers, hikers, and travelers to rural areas where farming and animal slaughtering occur.

Where and when

CCHF is endemic in parts of Africa, the Middle East, Asia, and southeastern Europe. In the Northern Hemisphere, transmission typically occurs between May and September. Seasonal outbreaks are also reported at altitudes around 1000 meters, likely due to favorable conditions for tick populations.

Prevention

Residents of and travelers to endemic rural areas should avoid tick bites by wearing protective clothing and using appropriate insect repellents. Preventive and protective measures should be applied when handling and slaughtering animals. Currently, there is no approved safe and effective vaccine for human use.



Treatment

Blood tests may confirm the diagnosis of CCHF. There is no specific antiviral treatment for CCHF; treatment primarily focuses on symptom management and supportive care to improve outcomes.

Symptoms

The incubation period for CCHF ranges from 1 to 13 days. The initial phase typically presents with nonspecific symptoms such as fever, headache, muscle pain, sore throat, eye redness, abdominal pain, and vomiting, lasting up to 7 days. This is followed by either recovery or progression to severe disease, where complications like bleeding, shock, multiple organ failure, and death may occur.



In case of infection

Mortality rates for CCHF in endemic countries range from approximately 4-20%, but can vary between 2-80%. The long-term effects of CCHF infection in survivors are not well-studied, and it is unclear whether specific complications exist. However, most recovering patients typically recover within 4 weeks without any lasting symptoms.