



Crimean-Congo Hemorrhagic Fever is a tick-borne viral disease that can be fatal to humans.

Personal protective measures to avoid tick bites can prevent the disease.

FACT SHEET

Crimean Congo Hemorrhagic Fever

WHAT IS CRIMEAN-CONGO HEMORRHAGIC FEVER?

Crimean-Congo Hemorrhagic Fever (CCHF) is a viral hemorrhagic fever of the *Nairovirus* group. Although primarily a disease of animals, sporadic cases and outbreaks of CCHF affecting humans do occur. CCHF has been found in certain parts of Europe, Africa, central Asia, and the Middle East. It has recently been diagnosed in the Balkans.

HOW IS CCHF TRANSMITTED?

Animals and humans become infected with CCHF from the bite of infected ticks. Several tick species are capable of transmitting the CCHF virus, but the most common vectors are of the *Hyalomma* genus. The CCHF virus may infect a wide range of domestic and wild animals. The majority of human cases of CCHF have occurred in people working in the livestock industry (agricultural or slaughterhouse workers and veterinarians) from direct contact with blood or other infected animal tissues.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF CCHF?

The incubation period for CCHF is dependent on how the virus was transmitted. Following a tick bite, the incubation period is usually one to three days. The incubation period following contact with infected blood or tissues is usually five to six days. Onset of symptoms is sudden, with fever, muscle pain, dizziness, neck pain and stiffness, backache, headache, sore eyes and photophobia (sensitivity to light). There may be nausea, vomiting and sore throat early on, which may be accompanied by diarrhea and generalized abdominal pain.

If you have been bitten by a tick and experience any of the symptoms listed above see a health care provider immediately.

WHAT CAN I DO TO PREVENT CCHF?

The best way to prevent CCHF and other tick-borne diseases is to avoid a tick bite. Use the following guidelines when venturing outdoors, along trails, in wooded areas, tall grass, or other areas that may harbor ticks:

- Wear trousers tucked into boots or socks and a long sleeved shirt tucked in at the waist.
- Use the "Buddy system" and check for ticks often. Promptly remove attached ticks.
- Apply repellents containing DEET to exposed skin in accordance with labeled instructions.
- Wear Permethrin treated clothing.
- Check yourself thoroughly for ticks; especially warm moist and hairy areas of your body.

People who work with livestock or other animals in the endemic areas can take measures to protect themselves. These include the use of repellents on the skin (e.g. DEET) and clothing (e.g. permethrin) and wearing gloves or other protective clothing to prevent skin contact with infected tissues or blood.

HOW ARE EMBEDDED TICKS REMOVED?

Ticks embedded into the skin can be removed by using tweezers to grasp the tick as close to the skin as possible. Slowly remove the tick by pulling with a single steady motion. Jerking or twisting will cause the tick mouthparts to be left in the skin and could cause a secondary infection. Clean the wound and apply an antiseptic.

Do not use home remedies to remove ticks! Using fire, hot matches, cigarettes, fingernail polish, petroleum jelly, or other such methods can cause the tick to regurgitate its gut contents into your blood stream, increasing the chances of getting CCHF or other tick-borne diseases.

REFERENCES:

1. Crimean-Congo Hemorrhagic Fever, Fact Sheet No. 208, Dec 1998. www.who.int
2. Control of Communicable Diseases Manual. 17th Edition, 2000. American Public Health Association.
3. Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine Fact Sheet: Lyme Disease.

This fact sheet is available at:
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