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Special Release

17 April, 2026

SPECIAL RELEASE FROM THE UNIVERSITY HEALTH SERVICE

**LASSA FEVER: YOU ARE YOUR OWN PRIMARY HEALTH CARE PROVIDER;
PLEASE PLAY YOUR PART TO PROTECT YOURSELF, OTHERS,
AND HEALTH WORKERS**

Lassa fever is an acute, animal-borne viral hemorrhagic illness endemic to West Africa, caused by the Lassa virus and transmitted primarily by the *Mastomys natalensis* rat. It causes 100,000–300,000 infections annually, with symptoms ranging from mild fever to severe organ failure, particularly in pregnant women.

Key Aspects of Lassa Fever:

Transmission: Humans contract the virus through contact with food, household items, or surfaces contaminated with the urine or feces of infected rodents.

Person-to-person transmission can occur through direct contact with infected bodily fluids (blood, urine, saliva, semen).

Lassa fever symptoms typically start gradually 1–3 weeks after exposure, appearing as a mild, malaria-like fever, headache, sore throat, and fatigue. While often mild, severe cases can progress to facial swelling, bleeding from body openings, vomiting, and chest pain. Early detection is crucial, as symptoms can be severe, especially in the third trimester of pregnancy.

Recommended actions include:

- Disallow rats in homes/avoid contacts with rats
- Store raw food in well covered containers
- Cover cooked food and drinks
- Manage waste properly
- Cook food well
- Wash fruits and vegetables before eating
- Throw away open overnight food
- Wash hands before eating & as recommended every time
- Don't share sharps, razors, toothbrushes
- Report rat problems
- Avoid bare-hand contact with body fluids of ill persons
- Support sick individuals to access care promptly
- Protect health workers by disclosure of relevant information eg travel history
- Observance of Universal safety and health precautions, as well as use of recommended protocols, protective wears, etc by both clients and health workers

KEY FACTS: No vaccine yet.

Prevention = Health Education + Personal & Environmental Hygiene + Rats out + Food covered + Report early + Protect health workers

Oyo State Emergency Help Lines

08033742052

08025245809

UHS Help Lines

07018327307

07077582320

Thank you

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Registrar