

Rift Valley Fever

What is Rift Valley fever and what causes it?

Rift Valley fever is a viral disease spread primarily by mosquitoes which can affect both humans and animals. Rift Valley fever occurs throughout most of Africa, and has been reported in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen. The disease has not occurred in the United States.

What animals get Rift Valley fever?

Sheep, cattle, and goats are the most severely affected. Other animals such as water buffalo, camels, monkeys, rodents, cats, dogs, and horses can also be infected. Severe disease can occur in newborn kittens and puppies.

How can my animal get Rift Valley fever?

Rift Valley fever is spread to animals through the bite of an infected mosquito (**vector**) and possibly ticks and biting midges.

How does Rift Valley fever affect my animal?

Rift Valley fever tends to affect young animals more severely than mature animals. In young animals, signs of infection include fever, failure to eat, weakness, diarrhea and death. In older animals, infection may cause fever, discharge from nose, weakness, diarrhea, vomiting, decreased milk production and abortion. Abortion is often the only sign in mature animals.

Can I get Rift Valley fever?

Yes, people can become infected with Rift Valley fever virus. Transmission in humans most commonly occurs

from the bite of an infected mosquito (**vector**). The virus may also be spread through **aerosol** from infected animal tissues or fluids (blood, urine, fetal fluids), during slaughter or when assisting the delivery of newborn animals.

Disease in people can range from no signs of illness to mild illness with fever to severe infection of the liver. Symptoms may include fever, headache, weakness, dizziness, stiffness of the neck, and sensitivity to light. Rare cases may develop into a severe hemorrhaging form of the disease. Most cases recover on their own. Death can occur in rare cases and is more likely when the severe form of the disease develops.

Who should I contact, if I suspect Rift Valley fever?

In Animals –

Contact your veterinarian.

In Humans –

Contact your physician.

How can I protect my animal from Rift Valley fever?

Rift Valley fever has never been reported in the United States. The best method to protect your animals from infection with Rift Valley fever is to use measures to decrease mosquito exposure.

How can I protect myself from Rift Valley fever?

You can reduce the chances of becoming infected with Rift Valley fever by taking measures to decrease mosquito exposure such as using mosquito repellent and foggers and avoiding the outdoors when mosquitoes are most active.

When assisting animals with the delivery of newborn animals or if handling animal tissues, wear gloves, a mask and other protective clothing. Always wash your hands after touching animals.

For More Information

CFSPH Technical Fact Sheets. Rift Valley Fever at <http://www.cfsph.iastate.edu/DiseaseInfo/>

CDC website. Rift Valley Fever at <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvrd/spb/mn-pages/dispages/rvf.htm>

World Health Organization (WHO). Rift Valley Fever at <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs207/en/>

