

# Rift Valley Fever

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## *What is Rift Valley fever (RVF)?*

RVF is a fatal, viral disease of unborn and newborn animals. RVF is endemic to southern and eastern Africa, Saudi Arabia and Yemen. These countries experience epidemics of the disease every 5 to 15 years, depending on rainfall.

## *Is the disease a foreign or emerging/endemic disease?*

RVF is a foreign animal disease.

## *What animals are affected?*

RVF affects cattle, sheep, goats, buffalo, camels, monkeys, gray squirrels and other rodents. Species such as cats, dogs and horses may be viremic (have the virus in the blood stream) but do not show severe signs of the disease.

## *How is it transmitted?*

RVF virus is transmitted by mosquitoes, primarily the Aedes mosquito, but also by ticks and biting midges. The virus multiplies in ruminants such as sheep and cattle. When a mosquito bites an infected animal it picks up the virus and can then transmit it to other animals. The virus survives in mosquito eggs until the next rainfall when the eggs hatch. The virus can stay alive in harsh environmental conditions for 4 months to 8 years.

## *What is the incubation period of the disease?*

The incubation period is approximately 3 days in animals and 2 to 6 days in humans.

## *What are the symptoms?*

Symptoms vary with the age, species and breed of the animal. The most common symptom in endemic areas is a high incidence of mortality in newborns and abortions in pregnant animals.

## *Can people be infected?*

Yes.

## *Is there a vaccine?*

Yes. Several different vaccines are used in endemic areas around the world.

## *Is this disease preventable?*

Yes. The best way to prevent RVF from entering the U.S. is to implement biosecurity protocols. Once RVF is introduced into an area it is very difficult to eradicate.

## *Is this a reportable disease?*

Yes. If a veterinarian diagnoses a case of RVF it should be reported immediately to state or federal animal and public health officials so they can control/eradicate the outbreak by implementing quarantines.

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***Who should be contacted if RVF is suspected?***

Immediately contact a private veterinarian or the state or federal animal health regulatory agency.

***For more information:***

Texas AgriLife Extension Service—Veterinary Medicine:

<http://aevm.tamu.edu>

The Center for Food Safety and Public Security:

<http://www.cfsph.iastate.edu/DiseaseInfo/default.htm>

CIDRAP:

<http://www.cidrap.umn.edu/cidrap/content/biosecurity/ag-biosec/anim-disease/rvf.html>

FAO:

<http://www.fao.org/ag/againfo/subjects/en/health/diseases-cards/rvfhtmlm>