Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever (CCHF)

- **What is Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever?**

Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever (CCHF) is a widespread disease caused by a tick-borne virus. The CCHF virus causes severe viral hemorrhagic fever outbreaks, with a case fatality rate of 10–40%.

CCHF is an endemic in Africa, the Balkans, the Middle East and Asia.

- **How do you get Crimean Congo hemorrhagic fever?**

The **CCHF virus** is **transmitted** to people either by:

- Tick bites
- Or through contact with infected animal blood or tissues during and immediately after slaughter.
- Human-to-human **transmission** can occur resulting from close contact with the blood, secretions, organs or other bodily fluids of infected persons.

- **The incubation period**

The incubation period is the time between exposure to appearance of symptoms. In CCHF, it depends on the mode of acquisition of the virus.

- Following infection by a tick bite, the incubation period is usually one to three days, with a maximum of nine days.
- Following contact with infected blood or tissues is usually five to six days, with a documented maximum of 13 days.

- **Signs and symptoms**

Onset of symptoms is sudden, with fever, myalgia, (muscle ache), dizziness, neck pain and stiffness, backache, headache, sore eyes and photophobia (sensitivity to light). There may be nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain and sore throat early on, followed by sharp mood swings and confusion. It includes a petechial rash (a rash caused by bleeding into the skin). It might lead to internal or external bleeding.
How can Congo Fever be prevented?

Prevention and control of CCHF infection is achieved by:

- Avoiding or minimizing exposure to infected ticks by using tick repellents.
- Wearing protective clothing and early and correct removal of ticks are recommended.

Reducing the risk of tick-to-human transmission:

- Wear protective clothing (long sleeves, long trousers);
- Wear light colored clothing to allow easy detection of ticks on the clothes;
- Use approved pesticides for ticks (chemicals used to kill ticks)

Reducing the risk of animal-to-human transmission:

- Wash hands regularly when dealing with animals;
- Avoid slaughtering of animals outside slaughterhouses;
- wear gloves and other protective clothing while handling animals or their tissues during slaughtering, butchering and culling procedures in slaughterhouses.

Reducing the risk of human-to-human transmission in the community:

- Avoid close physical contact with CCHF-infected people;
- Wear gloves and protective equipment when taking care of ill people;
- Wash hands regularly after caring for or visiting ill people.