



41. Handling and slaughtering animals

Last update: 2023-04-03

Overview

- Animals such as cattle, poultry (birds), bats, rats and pigs can carry and spread germs that cause diseases.
- All animals can carry germs in their bodies when they are alive and in their meat when they are slaughtered for food. Animal by-products, such as milk or eggs, can also carry germs.
- Animals that have died (including fetuses that have been aborted or animals that died during birth) can also carry germs.
- To avoid spreading diseases, it is important to wear personal protective equipment and follow recommended hygiene practices when dealing with live or dead animals and their by-products.

Diseases transmitted by animals

Disease	Animals	Transmission
Rift Valley fever	Sheep, cattle, other animals. Signs and symptoms in infected animals: abortion; deaths in young.	Transmitted by mosquito bites; droplets in the air; the blood of sick animals; the bodies of infected dead animals.
Avian influenza	Wild and domestic poultry (birds). Signs and symptoms in infected animals: death or neurological signs; may have no signs of illness.	Transmitted through droplets in the air; feathers; and potentially the eggs and meat of infected birds.
Mpox	Mainly monkeys. Also rats, squirrels and prairie dogs. Signs and symptoms in infected animals: mainly none. Skin sores, breathing problems in prairie dogs.	Transmitted by touching infected animals or their body fluids; the bite or scratch of an infected animal; the meat of infected animals.
Plague	Mainly rats. Also rabbits, squirrels and prairie dogs. Signs and symptoms in infected animals: none in above. May cause disease in cats and occasionally dogs.	Transmitted by flea bites; droplets in the air; the bodies of dead infected animals.

Disease	Animals	Transmission
Leptospirosis	Cattle, pigs, rodents (mainly rats). Signs and symptoms in infected animals: abortion; liver and kidney disease. None in rats.	Transmitted by contact (through a cut, eyes, mouth etc.); or ingestion of the urine of an infected animal.
MERS	Camels. Signs and symptoms in infected animals: none.	Transmitted by close contact with an infected animal or person.
Hantavirus pulmonary syndrome	Rodents (mainly rats). Signs and symptoms in infected animals: none.	Transmitted by droplets of rodent urine or faeces in the air; the bodies of dead infected rodents; a bite or a scratch.
Anthrax	Sheep, cattle (cows) and other animals. Signs and symptoms in infected animals: sudden death in sheep and cattle; neck swelling with breathing difficulties in pigs, dogs and cats.	Transmitted by contact with, or eating, infected animal products; spores in the air.

Handling poultry and livestock

Poultry (birds)

- Be careful when keeping birds at home: never let the birds inside the house.
- Keep the birds in a closed pen where they have plenty of room to roam.
- Do not let children play where the birds are kept.
- Cook poultry (meat or eggs) thoroughly.
- When preparing raw meat or eggs, always use clean utensils (knives, forks) and clean surfaces.
- After cooking, use new utensils for eating. Never use the same utensils that you cook with.
- When slaughtering and handling poultry, be sure to protect yourself. Wear gloves and goggles if possible.
- Never touch sick or dead birds without protection.
- Observe birds for signs of sickness. If you detect illness, inform the authorities.
- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water after any contact with living or dead animals (grooming, feeding, husbandry, etc.), their by-products (eggs, feathers, raw wool, etc.).
- Dispose of animal carcasses appropriately and swiftly (by burning or burying).

Sheep and cows

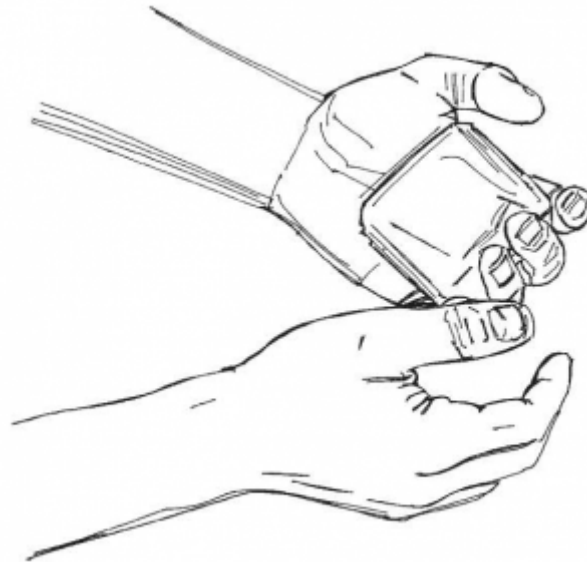
- Keep sheep or cows in a closed pen where they have plenty of room to roam.
- Do not let children play where animals are kept.
- Cook meat thoroughly.
- Boil milk before drinking or cooking it.
- When preparing raw meat, always use clean utensils (knives, forks) and clean surfaces.
- After cooking, use new utensils for eating. Never use the same utensils that you cook with.
- When handling or slaughtering livestock, be sure to protect yourself. Wear gloves and goggles if possible.
- Never touch sick or dead sheep or cows without protection.
- Observe animals for signs of sickness. If you detect illness, inform the authorities.
- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water after any contact with living or dead animals (grooming, feeding, husbandry, etc.), their by-products (eggs, feathers, raw wool, etc.).
- Dispose of animal carcasses appropriately and swiftly (by burning or burying).

Handling bushmeat (monkeys, rodents, wild pigs and others)

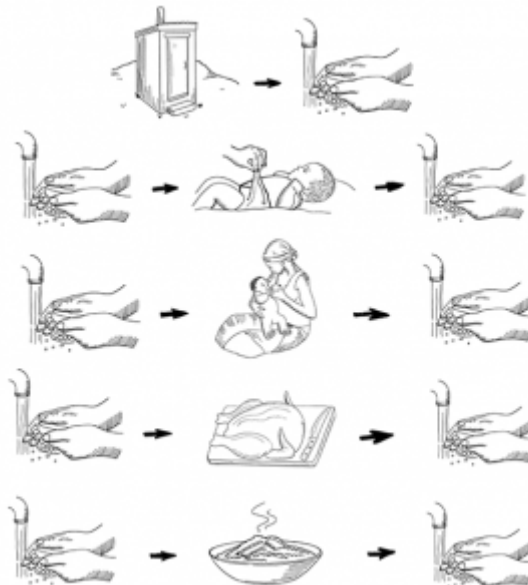
Bushmeat should be discouraged as a food source in areas where epidemic-causing infections are present in bushmeat. However, sometimes people may continue to eat bushmeat and to use bushmeat by-products. In these cases, volunteers should promote the following messages:

- Do not let children play where animal carcasses are kept.
- Cook bushmeat thoroughly.
- When preparing raw meat, always use clean utensils (knives, forks) and clean surfaces.
- After cooking, use new utensils for eating. Never use the same utensils that you cook with.
- When slaughtering, butchering or skinning bushmeat, be sure to protect yourself. Wear gloves and goggles if possible.
- If you come upon an animal in the bush that appears sick or is already dead, do not handle it without protection (for example, gloves).
- Observe animals for signs of sickness. If you detect illness, inform the authorities.
- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water after any contact with living or dead animals.
- Dispose of animal carcasses appropriately and swiftly (by burning or burying).

Community messages



08. Washing hands with soap



09. When to wash hands



25. Handling and slaughtering animals