

## **LYMPHOCYTIC CHORIOMENINGITIS (LCMV)**

**People at Risk:** *Lymphocytic Choriomeningitis* (LCMV) is a viral infection. Wild rodents are the primary host of the virus. Pet rodents, such as hamsters and guinea pigs, can become infected with LCMV after being in contact with wild rodents. Any animal worker who has contact with rodents may be at risk for developing LCMV.

**Transmission:** LCMV is shed in urine, saliva, and feces of infected animals. People can develop LCMV infection from exposure to rodent urine, droppings, saliva, or nesting material of infected rodents. Virus transmission can also occur when these materials are directly introduced into broken skin or into the nose, eyes, or mouth or by a bite from an infected animal.

**Symptoms:** The typical signs of LCMV are similar to those of influenza and include fever, stiff neck, malaise, lack of appetite, muscle aches, headache, nausea, and vomiting. Symptoms usually occur 1-2 weeks after exposure.

### **Diagnosis and Prevention:**

Prevention of human infection in laboratory animal facilities is by elimination of infected rodents prior to entering the facility. A blood test (serology) is available to test both animals and people. If working with infected animals, the worker should use protective clothing (lab coats, gloves, face and respiratory protection), practice good personal hygiene, and decontaminate cages and waste.