

### 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2025 | NCDC Public Health Advisory for the Festive Season

**Issued by:** Director-General, Nigeria Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (NCDC)

As we enter the festive season, the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (NCDC) urges all Nigerians to celebrate responsibly while prioritizing their health and safety.

This period of increased travel, large gatherings, and food sharing, coupled with the dry season increases the risk of infectious disease transmission.

#### Key Public Health Risks During This Period

1. Lassa Fever
2. Cerebrospinal Meningitis (CSM)
3. Diarrhoeal Diseases and Foodborne Illnesses (Linked to poor food handling, storage, and hygiene)
4. Antimicrobial Resistance: These conditions listed above significantly increase the risk of antibiotic misuse and overuse, which accelerate antimicrobial resistance and make common infections harder to treat.

#### Lassa Fever: What You Need to Know

Lassa fever is a viral haemorrhagic illness transmitted by contact with food or items contaminated by rat urine/faeces, or through body fluids of infected persons.

#### Prevention Tips

- Store food in tightly covered containers.
- Keep the environment clean and dispose of waste far from the house to prevent rats.
- Avoid bush burning that drives rodents into homes.
- Do not touch body fluids of sick persons or corpses. Use protective equipment.
- Seek urgent medical care if symptoms such as fever, vomiting, or bleeding develop.

## **Cerebrospinal Meningitis (CSM): What You Need to Know**

Meningitis is a life-threatening infection of the brain and spinal cord linings, common during the dry season.

### **Prevention Tips:**

- Avoid overcrowded spaces and ensure good ventilation at home and in gatherings.
- Cover mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing.
- Look out for symptoms: neck stiffness, fever, nausea, sensitivity to light, or seizures.
- Ensure children and adults in high-risk areas are vaccinated.
- Do not self-medicate. Always seek care from a health facility

## **Food Safety and Diarrhoeal Illnesses**

Improper food handling can lead to food poisoning and other gastrointestinal infections.

### **Prevention Tips:**

- Wash hands thoroughly before and after preparing food.
- Cook food thoroughly and store leftovers in a refrigerator or cool place.
- Avoid consuming food that has been left out for long periods.
- Drink safe, clean water (boiled or treated if unsure).
- Use clean utensils and avoid cross-contamination of raw and cooked foods.

## **Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR)**

During the festive season, the risk of AMR increases due to the overuse and misuse of antibiotics, often driven by self-medication, incomplete treatment, and the inappropriate use of antibiotics for viral infections such as colds, flu, and Lassa fever.

### **What Nigerians Need to Know and Do:**

- Misuse of antibiotics weakens their effectiveness, making common infections more difficult and expensive to treat.
- Antibiotics do not treat viral infections such as colds, flu, or most cases of fever.
- Do not self-medicate or purchase antibiotics without a prescription.
- Use antibiotics only when prescribed by a qualified healthcare professional.
- Always complete the full course of antibiotics as prescribed, even if you begin to feel better.
- Do not share antibiotics with others or use leftover medicines.

## General Health Tips for the Season

- Wash hands regularly with soap and water, or use alcohol-based hand sanitizers.
- Use face masks in crowded or poorly ventilated places.
- Maintain physical distancing where possible.
- Ensure that vaccinations, including meningitis vaccination, are up to date especially for children.

## NCDC's Commitment

NCDC continues to:

- Monitor disease trends across the country.
- Support state responses and public health interventions.
- Ensure access to rapid laboratory testing for suspected cases.
- Operate emergency response systems throughout the season.

If You Feel Unwell or Observe a Suspected Case

Call NCDC's 24/7 Toll-Free Line: 6232

Or report to the nearest health facility or Disease Surveillance Officer in your area.

Let's Celebrate Responsibly and together, we can reduce disease risks, protect our families, and ensure a safe and joyful festive season for all.

Wishing all Nigerians good health, peace, and happiness.

## CONTACT

NCDC Toll-free Number: 6232 | X: NCDCGov | Facebook: @NCDCgov | Instagram: @NCDCgov |

NCDC Media Releases

Stay informed. Stay protected. Stay healthy.

**Signed:**



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