



Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) Information for Schools: Frequently Asked Questions

November 24, 2014

Ebola Background

What is Ebola Virus Disease (EVD)?

Ebola is a serious disease caused by a virus. Symptoms can include abrupt onset of fever, malaise, weakness, fatigue, severe headache, body aches, loss of appetite, and can progress to include vomiting, diarrhea, and abdominal pain. Unexplained bleeding has not been a prominent symptom displayed during this outbreak.

Where does EVD come from?

Ebola was first identified in Africa in 1976 and there have been small sporadic outbreaks mostly in African countries since then. Fruit bats are considered the most likely natural source of the virus. Occasionally, monkeys or other animals may get infected. Humans may become infected from contact with an infected animal leading to person-to-person transmission.

How does a person become infected with Ebola?

Ebola spreads through direct contact with blood or body fluids (e.g., urine, saliva, feces, vomit, sweat, breast milk and semen) from a person who is ill with EVD. It is also possible for transmission to occur through contact with objects that have been heavily contaminated with these fluids.

Is Ebola transmitted through the air?

No. Airborne transmission among humans has not been documented.

Is it possible to get infected with Ebola through contaminated food or water?

No. Ebola is not transmitted through eating or drinking contaminated food or water.

How long does it take to become ill once an individual is infected?

Once exposed to the virus, it can take between 2 and 21 days to become ill, although most people become ill within 8-10 days.

Can someone get Ebola from a person who is not symptomatic?

No. Individuals who do not have symptoms of EVD are not contagious. For the virus to be transmitted, a person has to have direct contact with the body fluids of a symptomatic person infected with Ebola.

Is there a vaccine to prevent EVD?

There are currently no FDA approved vaccines to prevent EVD.

Is there a treatment for EVD?

The treatment for EVD includes supportive care such as managing a patient's electrolytes, maintaining hydration and treating any secondary infections. There is no known cure at this time, but scientists are working to develop a treatment.

Recommendations for Schools

What should school administrators, faculty and staff be aware of regarding Ebola Virus Disease?

It is extremely unlikely that schools will encounter an individual with EVD. The federal government and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are screening all travelers upon arrival in the United States, that are returning from countries affected by the Ebola outbreak. The NH Division of Public Health Services (DPHS) is also being notified of any such travelers whose end destination is the State of New Hampshire. Daily monitoring is provided by the NH DPHS in order to quickly identify any person with early symptoms of possible EVD. If the returned traveler becomes symptomatic, arrangements will be made for them to be evaluated at a hospital, they will be immediately isolated and will not report to work or school.

Can someone work or attend school if they have recently traveled to a country affected by Ebola Virus Disease?

Returned travelers with low or negligible risk exposure, may attend school and work if they do not have a fever or other symptoms of EVD. Travelers with a high risk exposure to an Ebola patient will be required to quarantine themselves at home for 21 days until it can be assured that they will not develop the disease. Travelers with an intermediate risk exposure while traveling (such as healthcare workers who cared for an Ebola patient while wearing appropriate personal protective equipment) may be asked to voluntarily quarantine themselves, but will not be mandated to do so if they refuse. DPHS's full isolation and quarantine policy can be found online at:

<http://www.dhhs.state.nh.us/dphs/cdcs/ebola/documents/isolationquarantine-interim.pdf>

What should I do if someone reports they are ill with a fever or other symptoms and has a travel history to an area affected by Ebola?

Do not allow them to work or attend school. Notify the NH Department of Health and Human Services Division of Public Health Services at (603) 271-4496 immediately.

Keep in mind that it is flu season in the State of New Hampshire.

- Students presenting with fever and other flu-like symptoms, may have influenza or another viral illness.
- Promote basic infection control practices such as excellent hand washing with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol.
- Promote respiratory etiquette (covering coughs and sneezes) and encourage students and employees to remain home if they are ill.
- Encourage students and school employees to get an annual flu shot.

If you have any questions about Ebola Virus Disease, contact your local health department or the NH Division of Public Health Services at 603-271-4496.

Additional Information and Resources

NH Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health Services: 603-271-4496

<http://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/cdcs/ebola.htm>

Resources for Parents, Schools and Pediatric Healthcare Professionals

<http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/children/index.html>

CDC Ebola information for colleges, universities, and students:

<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/advice-for-colleges-universities-and-students-about-ebola-in-west-africa>

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2014