

November 2014

Emergency Preparedness Pointers

Ebola Awareness

The holiday season is not far off and increasing numbers of people will be travelling for business or vacation. Crowded airports will be filled with people from all over the world as they catch connecting flights. This close proximity to others can increase the risks of getting coughed or sneezed on by someone with a cold or flu. There is also the possibility of coming in contact with a contaminated armrest or tray table. This can increase the risk of contracting a common cold or flu, but Ebola is transmitted differently than these diseases. As with any potential threat, being aware of it is the first step. Detailed information on Ebola is available on the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website located at:

<http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/outbreaks/2014-west-africa/qa.html>

The following information is taken from this site and provides basic awareness material.

What is Ebola?

Ebola is a rare and deadly disease caused by infection with one of the five Ebola virus strains. Four of the strains can cause disease in humans while all five can infect non-human primates (monkeys, gorillas, and chimpanzees). Ebola was first discovered in 1976 near the Ebola River in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Since then, 24 outbreaks have occurred across several African countries. The average Ebola virus fatality rate is around 50%; fatality rates have varied from 25% to 90% in past outbreaks.



Ebola Transmission



Unlike respiratory illnesses (i.e. measles, chickenpox) that can be transmitted by virus particles suspended in the air after an infected person coughs or sneezes, Ebola is transmitted by direct contact with body fluids. Direct contact means that body fluids (blood, saliva, mucus, vomit, urine, semen or feces) from an infected person (alive or dead) have touched someone's eyes, nose, or mouth or an open cut, wound, or abrasion. Droplets (splashes or sprays) of respiratory or other secretions from a person who is sick with Ebola can carry the disease. Infection can also occur from objects that are contaminated such as needles/syringes, bedding, clothes or other medical equipment. Ebola also spreads through contact with infected fruit bats or primates (apes, monkeys); there is currently no evidence that mosquitos or other insects can transmit it.

Ebola Symptoms

According to the CDC, the signs and symptoms of Ebola can appear 2 to 21 days after exposure. The average time is 8 to 10 days. The following symptoms develop over several days and become increasingly severe.

- ❖ Fever
- ❖ Severe Headache
- ❖ Fatigue
- ❖ Vomiting and Diarrhea
- ❖ Weakness
- ❖ Stomach Pain
- ❖ Muscle Pain
- ❖ Unexplained Bleeding or Bruising

The CDC created a very informative graphic that compares Flu and Ebola symptoms, it is available at:

<http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/pdf/is-it-flu-or-ebola.pdf>

Ebola Exposure

Healthcare providers and any family or friends that are caring for Ebola patients are at the highest risk of infection. If you travel to an area affected by an Ebola outbreak make sure to avoid contact with a sick person's bodily fluids and practice good hygiene. Wash your hands with soap and water or an alcohol based hand sanitizer. Do not handle items that may have come in contact with an infected person's bodily fluids (clothes, bedding, needles). Ebola can survive for several hours on dry surfaces such as countertops or door knobs, but the virus can be killed with hospital-grade disinfectants (such as household bleach).

Be aware of potential domestic risks and keep up to date with Ebola monitoring in the United States, go to:

<http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/outbreaks/2014-west-africa/united-states-imported>



Ada County Emergency Management
7200 Barrister Drive ♦ Boise, ID. 83704 ♦ (208) 577-4750 ♦ FAX (208) 577-4759
HOME PAGE: www.accem.org ♦ E-MAIL: pmarusich@adaweb.net

