

EBOLA INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Over the past week reports on the Ebola virus outbreak has been flooding the news. The health, safety, and welfare of our students and communities are our top priority. What schools need to do is learn and teach facts about Ebola virus to prevent hysteria and myth, and promote humanitarian compassion.

How do you get the Ebola virus?

Ebola is transmitted through direct contact with bodily fluids of someone who is already showing symptoms of the disease, including:

- Bodily fluids of a person who is sick with or has died from Ebola (blood, vomit, pee, poop, sweat, semen, spit, other fluids).
- Objects contaminated with the virus (needles, medical equipment).
- Infected animals (by contact with blood or fluids or infected meat).

Ebola is NOT spread through casual contact, air, water, or food grown or legally purchased in the United States or food purchased in the commissary.

Coming into contact with people who do not have symptoms of Ebola poses no risk, even if they have recently traveled to affected countries in Africa.

What are the symptoms of the Ebola virus?

The early symptoms of the Ebola virus include:

1. Fever
2. Headache
3. Diarrhea
4. Vomiting
5. Stomach pain
6. Unexplained bleeding or bruising
7. Muscle pain

Symptoms may appear anywhere from 2 to 21 days after exposure to the Ebola virus though 8-10 days is most common. Ebola can only be spread to others after symptoms begin.

Many other communicable diseases have similar symptoms, such as the flu, Enterovirus D68, norovirus, gastroenteritis, and others.

If you have not received a flu vaccine yet, now is the time to do it, even if it is not required in your area, prevention is best practice.

When is someone able to spread the Ebola disease to others?

In order for the virus to be transmitted, an individual would have to have direct contact with an individual who is experiencing symptoms or has died of the disease.

What are the Risk Factors?

For most people, the risk of getting Ebola Virus Disease is low. The risk increases if you:

- **Travel to Africa.** You're at increased risk if you visit or work in areas where Ebola virus outbreaks have occurred.
- **Conduct animal research.** People are more likely to contract the Ebola virus if they conduct animal research with monkeys imported from Africa or the Philippines.
- **Provide medical or personal care.** Family members are often infected as they care for sick relatives. Medical personnel also can be infected if they don't use protective gear, such as surgical masks and gloves.
- **Prepare people for burial.** The bodies of people who have died of Ebola or Marburg hemorrhagic fever are still contagious. Helping prepare these bodies for burial can increase your risk of developing the disease.

For more information about Ebola visit the following reliable sites:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

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

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

<http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/pdf/ebola-factsheet.pdf>

U.S. Army Medical Department; Womack Army Medical Center

<http://www.wamc.amedd.army.mil/Lists/News/DispForm.aspx?ID=172&Source=http%3A%2F%2Fwww%2Ewamc%2Eamedd%2Earmy%2Emil%2FPages%2Fdefault%2Easpx>

Mayo Clinic

<http://newsnetwork.mayoclinic.org/discussion/seeking-ebola-questions-and-answers/>

How to help students/children

- Be aware of the facts; do not get consumed with irrational fears.
- Avoid over-exposure to media, which may lead to greater levels of fear and stress around the issue.
- Be watchful of your children's exposure to media and images that may raise their levels of fear and anxiety.
- Be aware of your own reaction to the crisis and media exposure; children are very sensitive and tend to respond to their parents' own feelings around an issue.
- Regardless of your children's ages, speak to them about the issue and find out how they are feeling about it. Speak with them about the facts so that there are less rumors and misinformation about Ebola.
- Take care of yourself by getting the proper rest and exercise to manage your stress levels.
- This is the perfect time to remind us all of the single most effective means of preventing the spread of infectious diseases; hand washing with soap and water. School nurses are an excellent source for hand hygiene. Visit the sites for hand washing lessons:
<http://www.health.state.mn.us/handhygiene/curricula/>
<http://www.cdc.gov/bam/>
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/parenting/wp/2014/10/07/5-tips-for-talking-to-your-kids-about-ebola/>
http://kidshealth.org/parent/general/sick/hand_washing.html

Ebola Virus/outbreak lesson plan for teachers

http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/lessons_plans/ebola-outbreak-lesson-plan/

<http://www.brainpop.com/educators/community/bp-jr-topic/washing-hands/>

Treating People Fairly

- When communities face unfamiliar illnesses that appear to be threatening, there is a tendency to stay away from those who have been in contact with the person who is sick (e.g., family, friends, place of employment). As long as these people are not showing any symptoms, they can't spread the Ebola virus.
- Resist the urge to believe that people who have lived in or visited Western African countries will automatically get the Ebola virus.
- Explain to your children that people who have the Ebola virus are not at fault.
- Encourage your children to be supportive of people who have been in close contact with others who have the Ebola virus. These family members and/or friends are likely going through a hard time as they help their loved one get better.

Ebola in West Africa

To learn more about the Ebola outbreak in West Africa visit the following sites:

<http://www.wral.com/liberia-children-orphaned-ostracized-by-ebola/14059573/>

http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/aid/countries/factsheets/thematic/wa_ebola_en.pdf

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/monkey-cage/wp/2014/09/25/africoms-ebola-response-and-the-militarization-of-humanitarian-aid/>

<http://www.usaid.gov/news-information/press-releases/oct-15-2014-usaid-administrator-announces-142-million-humanitarian-assistance-ebola>