

Guidance for Child Day Care Programs Regarding Ebola

- Child care programs DO NOT need to monitor children or staff for Ebola.
- If a child or staff member is ill and has not traveled to West Africa (Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone) – it is HIGHLY UNLIKELY that they have Ebola. Persons who have traveled elsewhere in Africa or who have been in contact with someone who is not ill from these three countries are not at risk. Individuals leaving the three affected countries are being screened for symptoms and history of exposure at the airport of departure, and also again upon entry at airports in the United States.
- The chances of getting Ebola are extremely low unless:
 1. A person has traveled to an area affected by an outbreak (Guinea, Liberia or Sierra Leone); **AND**
 2. Had direct contact with the body fluids of someone infected with Ebola.

Children/Staff who have recently returned from Guinea, Liberia or Sierra Leone:

Healthy people who recently returned from West Africa can attend child care or work while monitoring their health for the 21-day time frame with local public health officials.

- If a child, provider or staff member who has traveled to West Africa develops a fever during the 21-day time frame while not at the program, they should call 9-1-1, alert local public health officials and they SHOULD NOT return to the child care program. Home-based providers should refrain from caring for children.
- If, within 21 days of returning from West Africa, **a provider or staff member** develops fever or other symptoms while at work, they should be isolated in a separate room until medical help arrives. The program director must contact 9-1-1, report the illness and the recent travel. The illness should also be reported to your local health department. Use the following link for local health department contact information:
http://www.nysacho.org/i4a/member_directory/feSearchForm.cfm?directory_id=
- If, within 21 days of returning from West Africa, **a child** develops fever or other symptoms while at the program, they should be isolated in a separate room with supervision until medical help arrives. The program director must contact 9-1-1, report the illness and the recent travel. The child's parent or guardian must also be contacted right away. The illness should also be report to your local health department (see link above for contact information).
- If a room at the program is contaminated with body fluids from a staff member or child who traveled to West Africa and who becomes sick during the 21-day period, the room should be closed off. The local health department will evaluate the situation and provide further guidance regarding cleaning and reopening the room.

Children and families with ties to West Africa are NOT a threat. Ebola is caused by a virus, not a person, and it is difficult to transmit. Child Care Providers are encouraged to use this fact sheet to answer questions staff and parents may have regarding Ebola.

What is Ebola?

Ebola is a severe disease caused by a virus. It refers to a group of viruses that affect multiple organ systems in the body. The virus is named after the Ebola River in the Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire), where one of the first outbreaks occurred in 1976.

How do you get the Ebola virus?

- Ebola only spreads when people are sick.
- Ebola can only be spread to others after symptoms begin.
- It is NOT spread through the air or water or any food grown or approved for consumption in the United States.
- It is spread by:
 - Direct contact with body fluids (blood, vomit, urine, feces, sweat) of a person who is sick with or who has died from Ebola.
 - Contact with objects contaminated with the virus (needles, medical equipment).
 - Contact with infected animals (by contact with blood or fluids or infected bush meat from Africa).

What are the Symptoms?

Ebola symptoms can appear from two to 21 days after exposure. They include:

- Abrupt Fever
- Headache
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Stomach pain
- Unexplained bleeding or bruising
- Joint and muscle pain

Remember: Anyone with those symptoms, including those who traveled to West Africa, is much more likely to have another disease, such as the flu.

Can I get Ebola from a person who is infected but doesn't have any symptoms?

No. Individuals who do not have symptoms are not contagious. In order for the virus to be transmitted, an individual would have to have direct contact with an individual who is experiencing symptoms.

Can Ebola be transmitted through the air?

No. Ebola is not a respiratory disease like the flu, so it is not transmitted through the air, water or food approved for consumption in the United States. You cannot get Ebola by just being near someone who has Ebola.

Who is at risk for Ebola?

Health care workers and the family and friends in close contact with Ebola patients are at highest risk for contracting Ebola.

What can I do to help safeguard my family, friends and child care program?

- Get your flu shot - Early symptoms of both the flu and Ebola are very similar. As standard protocol, doctors will be asking if a patient with those symptoms has had a flu shot to rule out the flu. Children are at greater risk from seasonal influenza (flu) than they are from Ebola.
- Maintain good hygiene - Standard infection control procedures will prevent the spread of Ebola. The Ebola virus is killed by soap, detergent, Purell® or other hand sanitizer, chlorine disinfection, heat, direct sunlight, can kill it.
- Use good infection control practices, including frequent hand washing, proper cleaning of equipment, toys and surfaces such as countertops, doorknobs, sinks and toilets.
- Use standard protocols when dealing with sick children.

If you have further questions about Ebola, Contact the New York State Ebola Hotline:

1-800-861-2280