

What is Ebola?

Ebola is a rare and deadly disease caused by infection with one of the Ebola virus strains. The 2014 Ebola outbreak is the largest in history, affecting multiple countries in West Africa. As of 10/15/14, there have been 3 confirmed cases in the U.S. Although the risk of an Ebola outbreak in the U.S. is very low, public health officials and many partners are taking precautions to prevent this from happening.

How Infection Happens

Ebola is **NOT** spread through the air, by water, mosquitos or food. Ebola can only be spread through direct contact with or body fluids of someone who has symptoms or who has died from Ebola. Direct contact means that body fluids (blood, saliva, mucus, sweat, vomit, urine, or feces) from an infected person (alive or dead) have touched someone's eyes, nose, mouth, or an open cut, wound, or abrasion. A person infected with Ebola cannot spread the disease until symptoms appear.

Symptoms of Ebola include:

- Fever (greater than 101.5°F)
- Severe headache
- Joint and muscle aches
- Weakness
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Abdominal (stomach) pain
- Lack of appetite
- Unexplained hemorrhage (bleeding or bruising)

Symptoms may appear anywhere from 2 to 21 days after exposure (average is 8 -10 days).

How do I protect myself against Ebola?

- CDC urges all US residents to avoid nonessential travel to Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Liberia.
- Wash hands frequently or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Avoid contact with blood and body fluids (urine, feces, saliva, mucus, breast milk, vomit, sweat or semen) of any person, particularly someone who is sick.
- Do not handle items that may have come in contact with an infected person's blood or body fluids like clothing, bedding, needles, or medical equipment.
- Do not touch the body of someone who has died from Ebola.
- Do not touch bats and nonhuman primates or their blood and fluids and do not touch or eat raw meat prepared from these animals.

Who is at risk?

Only people who have traveled to Guinea, Liberia, or Sierra Leone or have had close contact with a person known or suspected to have Ebola are considered to be at risk. Someone who meets these risk factors and has symptoms should call 911 for help right away and stay away from other people.

What Columbus is Doing?

Knowing the possibility of Ebola cases exists, medical and public health professionals in Columbus have been putting plans into place. Columbus Public Health (CPH) has been meeting with local public health partners, Franklin County Public Health, Ohio Department of Health, response partners, and healthcare systems. Local public health also has a system to monitor, track, investigate, and control infectious diseases and outbreaks. CPH and its partners will continue to monitor the situation and share needed information with the public.

What are we doing in Gahanna Schools?

Gahanna Jefferson Public School nurses are observing students for signs and symptoms of Ebola virus. They will also be monitoring attendance. It is GJPS policy that any student with a fever over 100°F and/or with vomiting or diarrhea needs to stay home for 24 hours after the symptoms have passed (without the aid of medication). We will be diligent in enforcing this policy. This is for the safety and well-being of all of our students and staff.

We are also encouraging normal routine health prevention precautions. These include good and frequent handwashing, obtaining flu shots, and staying home when ill. We will also ensure that our custodians are diligent in cleaning and disinfecting the classrooms in our schools.

More Information:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

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

Columbus Public Health (general information)

www.publichealth.columbus.gov

614-645-1474, Mon-Fri, 8 am-5 pm

ODH 24 hour call center for any Ohioans with questions related to Ebola

866-800-1404