

## **Ebola Education**

The New Orleans Health Department has been working in conjunction with the Department of Health and Hospitals to make sure that all healthcare providers have the most up to date guidance on the detection, treatment and prevention of Ebola. On Monday, October 6, Mayor Mitch Landrieu hosted a roundtable meeting with public health and emergency officials from the city and state to discuss the preparations that are being made in the event of an Ebola case in New Orleans. There are currently no cases of Ebola in Louisiana.

Your students should always be encouraged to practice good hygiene and avoid close contact with someone who is sick. Please be especially mindful if any of your students, their family or friends have traveled to or are visiting from West Africa. Any of these students who show signs of flu-like symptoms should be immediately referred to the Department of Health and Hospitals Office of Public Health at 504-568-8313 or after hours at 800-256-2748.

### **About the Ebola Virus**

Ebola is a rare virus that is spread through direct contact (through broken skin or mucous membranes) with a sick person's blood or body fluids (urine, saliva, feces, vomit, semen, etc.) or contact with objects like needles or soiled linens that have been contaminated by a sick person's blood or bodily fluids.

It is NOT spread through water, air or food consumption. Ebola has only originated in central and West Africa. The current outbreak in West Africa is concentrated in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea with a few cases in Nigeria. There is also a separate outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo, but it is a different strain of the virus and unrelated to the West African outbreak.

**Symptoms of Ebola** include a fever of over 101.5 F, severe headache, muscle pain, vomiting, diarrhea, stomach pain and unexplained bleeding or bruising. Symptoms may appear anywhere from 2 to 21 days after exposure, but the average time is 8 to 10 days. People are only contagious when they exhibit symptoms of the disease, including fever, which is typically the first symptom to appear. There are currently no vaccinations or specific treatments available for Ebola, but experimental treatments and vaccines are in development.

**Prevention and Protection** from the Ebola Virus: The CDC states that the following are the best ways to prevent oneself from getting sick from infectious diseases, including the common cold, the flu, and Ebola:

- DO wash your hands often with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Do NOT touch the blood or body fluids (like urine, feces, saliva, vomit, sweat, and semen) of people who are sick
- Do NOT handle items that may have come in contact with a sick person's blood or body fluids, like clothes, bedding, needles, or medical equipment
- Do NOT touch the body of someone who has died

Education on the transmission methods, particularly focusing on debunking traditional Ebola myths, is encouraged. All school health centers and clinicians should abide by the following CDC guidelines when treating someone who is sick or may be sick with Ebola:

Separate patient in a private room with the door shut.

Use proper infection prevention and control procedures; standard, contact, and droplet precautions are recommended if Ebola is suspected.

Wear the right personal protective equipment (PPE), including masks, gloves, gowns, facemask and eye protection, when entering the patient care area. Before leaving the patient area, carefully remove PPE and make sure not to contaminate your skin and clothing. Dispose of PPE as biohazard waste.

After removing PPE, wash your hands using soap and water (preferred) or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol. Use soap and water when hands are visibly dirty.

To report a suspected case of Ebola please contact the Department of Health and Hospitals Office of Public Health at 504-568-8313 or after hours at 800-256-2748 immediately. If the Office of Public Health suspects that the individual has Ebola they will direct you to call 911 for transportation to a hospital.

Follow protocols for cleaning and disinfecting reusable medical equipment and proper disposal of needles and other disposable equipment.

If you have any questions regarding the Ebola virus or the current situation, please email the New Orleans Health Department at [healthdepartment@nola.gov](mailto:healthdepartment@nola.gov) or visit <http://www.nola.gov/health-department/emergency-preparedness/ebola/>.

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