Welcome to the Siouxland District Health Department (SDHD) Website. Use the A-Z Index to easily search our site or find out more about our programs and services by clicking on that tab.

SDHD's mission statement: **"leading a collaborative effort to build a healthier community through improved access to health services, education and disease prevention."** Vision statement: "**A healthy community for all**".

EBOLA FACTS AND FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT IS BEING DONE IN WOODBURY COUNTY IN RESPONSE TO THE THREAT OF EBOLA?

A LOT. Individuals from many organizations including emergency management, public safety, hospitals, doctors offices, and public health have been very busy planning for the possibility that someone with Ebola could be discovered in our community. In fact, a meeting involving many potentially impacted organizations took place at Siouxland District Health Department on October 21. The point of the collaborative meetings is to share ideas and the latest information, ask important questions, access resources, and align plans to be as consistent as possible in the community.

The focus of the planning involves early recognition of a potentially infected individual, limiting the number of people to have contact with that individual once he/she is identified, getting a proper diagnosis, and protecting those healthcare workers that must come in contact with an infected person.

Activities include screening procedures (primarily asking questions about symptoms and travel history) to identify someone that may be infected and planning for the isolation of a patient in healthcare facilities and in emergency situations. Developing procedures for the proper collection and transportation of laboratory specimens, determining what personal protective equipment is needed for the safety of healthcare workers and actually obtaining those materials are also among the highest priorities right now.

Planning for Ebola is not simple and many factors need to be considered. But much planning, collaboration, and cooperation is currently happening in Woodbury County in an effort to keep our community as safe from this disease as possible.

HOW LONG DOES THE VIRUS LIVE OUTSIDE THE BODY?

Ebola on dried surfaces such as doorknobs and countertops can survive for several hours. But viruses in body fluids (such as blood) can survive up to several days at room temperature. In general, warmer and drier conditions kill Ebola faster than cool and wet. Hospital grade disinfectants, as well as household bleach, kill Ebola.

HOW DOES SOMEONE BECOME INFECTED WITH EBOLA?

Ebola is spread through direct contact with the body fluids of a person who is already infected. The common body fluids that a person could be exposed to include urine, saliva, sweat, feces, vomit, breast milk, and semen. **You cannot get Ebola unless you have had direct contact with the body fluids of a symptomatic person.**

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF EBOLA?

Symptoms include fever (greater than 101.5˚F), severe headaches, muscle pain, diarrhea, vomiting, abdominal pain, and unexplained bleeding or bruising.

Symptoms may appear between 2 and 21 days after exposure, but the average is 8-10 days.

It's important to note that these symptoms are non-specific and are common symptoms of other illnesses. Combining these symptoms with travel to certain countries in West Africa and/or contact with a person known to have Ebola is important in getting a proper diagnosis.

WHAT ARE THE COUNTRIES OF CONCERN IN AFRICA?

Ebola is currently spreading in **Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Liberia** in the far western edge of Africa. There has been Ebola activity in Nigeria and Senegal as well, but the virus is not currently spreading in these countries. There is also a smaller outbreak in Congo right now, but it is unrelated to the large outbreak in West Africa.

IS THERE CONCERN ABOUT TRAVELING TO TEXAS SINCE THEY HAVE HAD CASES NOW?

No. There is virtually no risk to someone traveling to Dallas or other areas nearby. Infections in the general population are not occurring at this time. The first infected person in the US came from Liberia and the other two cases were health care workers that helped treat him when he was very sick. There is little reason at this time to think that the general public is at risk in Dallas or anywhere else.

It is important to have an appropriate level of concern about Ebola. It is a very serious illness and it's very serious that this disease has spread in parts of the world and infected Americans here in the US. And while it's impossible for any of us to have zero risk, the overwhelming majority of us does not and will not have the types of exposures necessary to become infected with Ebola.

Parent's Survival Guide Released

iHeartMedia in conjunction with Siouxland CARES has released the 13th Anniversary Issue of the Parent's Survival Guide. It contains a lot of great information such as tips and resources for parents and information on preventing bullyings and youth development programs that are offered in our area. It is a great read from cover to cover.

Parent's Survival Guide

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