



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Idaho Public Health Districts

# Idaho Public Health Districts

November, 2014

## Public Health's Ebola Preparedness

The world is facing the biggest and most complex Ebola outbreak in history. Ebola is a rare and deadly disease caused by infection with one of the Ebola virus strains. Public health districts play a leading role in preventing the spread of Ebola in their jurisdictions. While there has not been a case of Ebola in Idaho, its presence in several U.S. cities is reason enough to revise and update our response plans.

For several months, staff from Idaho's Public Health Districts have been closely monitoring the Ebola outbreak. As additional information continues to pour in, district staff is compiling information; providing situational awareness with district staff, community partners, and the public; and conducting preparedness exercises with their local healthcare professionals, emergency medical system professionals, first responders, hospitals, universities, colleges, public schools, and airports.

Our agencies are helping our community partners take a closer look at the procedures and precautions in place at their facilities. For example, if someone showing Ebola symptoms (fever, severe headache, muscle pain, weakness, fatigue, diarrhea, vomiting, weakness, stomach pain, unexplained bleeding or bruising) were to walk into the emergency room of one of Idaho's hospitals, a staff member would immediately start asking the patient about their recent travel history. If they are considered at risk for infection, the health districts would then begin the process of contact tracing (see graphic), while blood samples are sent to the Idaho State Laboratory and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for testing.

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### What is contact tracing?

Contact tracing can stop the Ebola outbreak in its tracks



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

**Contact tracing** is finding everyone who comes in direct contact with a sick Ebola patient. Contacts are watched for signs of illness for 21 days from the last day they came in contact with the Ebola patient. If the contact develops a fever or other Ebola symptoms, they are immediately isolated, tested, provided care, and the cycle starts again—all of the new patient's contacts are found and watched for 21 days. **Even one missed contact can keep the outbreak going.**



## HEALTHY PEOPLE IN HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

PANHANDLE HEALTH DISTRICT (1)	PUBLIC HEALTH - IDAHO NORTH CENTRAL DISTRICT (2)	SOUTHWEST DISTRICT HEALTH (3)	CENTRAL DISTRICT HEALTH (4)	SOUTH CENTRAL PUBLIC HEALTH DISTRICT (5)	SOUTHEASTERN IDAHO PUBLIC HEALTH (6)	EASTERN IDAHO PUBLIC HEALTH DISTRICT (7)
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Page 2

## Facts about Ebola

Ebola virus is **not** spread through

- **Casual contact**
- **Air**
- **Water**
- **Food grown or legally purchased in the U.S.**

### How do you get the Ebola virus?

Direct contact with

- 1 **Body fluids of a person who is sick with or has died from Ebola.** (blood, vomit, urine, feces, sweat, semen, spit, other fluids)
- 2 **Objects contaminated with the virus** (needles, medical equipment)
- 3 **Infected animals** (by contact with blood or fluids or infected meat)

### Early Symptoms

Ebola can only be spread to others after symptoms begin. Symptoms can appear from 2 to 21 days after exposure.

- **Fever**
- **Stomach pain**
- **Headache**
- **Unexplained bleeding or bruising**
- **Diarrhea**
- **Muscle pain**
- **Vomiting**

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

**Ebola only spreads when people are sick.**

A patient must have symptoms to spread the disease to others.



MONTH						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

**After 21 days**, if an exposed person does not develop symptoms, they will not become sick with Ebola.



CS20091

Ebola is currently a low-risk virus for transmission in Idaho, but is extremely dangerous because of its high case fatality rate. Coordinated public health actions are essential to stop the spread of Ebola. With the complex nature and seriousness of the outbreak, CDC has created interim guidance for monitoring people potentially exposed to Ebola. Idaho's Public Health Districts are prepared to conduct active or direct active monitoring of health care workers and travelers returning to Idaho from one of the affected countries in West Africa who may have been potentially exposed to Ebola ([as defined by the CDC](#)), but who are showing no signs or symptoms of the disease. The West African countries currently affected by the outbreak include Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Mali.

Active monitoring means that staff from local public health districts will assume responsibility for establishing regular communication with potentially exposed individuals for 21 days from the last exposure. This monitoring will include checking daily to assess for the presence of symptoms and fever, rather than relying solely on individuals to self-monitor and report symptoms if they develop. Direct active monitoring means the local public health staff conducts active monitoring through direct observation of the potentially exposed individual. The purpose of active (or direct active) monitoring is to ensure that, if individuals with risk factors for Ebola become ill, they are identified as soon as possible after symptom onset so they can be rapidly isolated and evaluated. Idaho's public health districts will manage individuals potentially exposed to Ebola in the least restrictive manner possible, while maintaining the safety of the public.

Furthermore, Idaho's public health districts are prepared to help lead the logistics of a patient with confirmed Ebola in their jurisdiction. Whether it's monitoring, transferring, decontaminating or cremating, our incident command teams are ready and paying close attention to logistics issues with other Ebola patients in the U.S.

Again, the risk of getting Ebola in Idaho is very low, but we are dealing with a highly infectious virus. It's important that the public is educated and taking this very seriously. With the community's active involvement and awareness, we can beat this epidemic. That's why public health districts are working to provide our communities with tools and information to prevent infection here in Idaho.

For more information regarding the current Ebola situation in Idaho, you may contact your local public health district or visit [www.ebola.idaho.gov](http://www.ebola.idaho.gov). Information on the worldwide situation is available at [www.cdc.gov/ebola](http://www.cdc.gov/ebola).

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention