



# TOWN OF NEW MILFORD

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Office of the Health Department

## **Ebola Information and Guidance for the Public**

The public health and safety of all residents of the Town of New Milford is the top priority of the New Milford Health Department. With the Ebola virus making national headlines, it is important to share with you factual information about the virus to help you understand how the disease is transmitted and to minimize undue concern.

The Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) is working closely with all local health departments to provide timely information about the lessons learned from recent cases in other states and Connecticut's policies and actions for preventing spread of the virus here.

At this time, there are no cases of Ebola in Connecticut but we are working continuously on preparedness plans with the DPH and our local and regional partners in the event that happens.

Please use the Ebola facts below to gain an understanding of how Ebola is recognized and how it is spread.

### **Ebola Facts:**

- There is an Ebola outbreak in West Africa. Check the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website ([www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola](http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola)) for the latest affected areas. The Connecticut Department of Public Health website also provides this information at: ([www.ct.gov/dph/cwp/view.asp?a=3115&Q=555224](http://www.ct.gov/dph/cwp/view.asp?a=3115&Q=555224)).
- The chances of getting Ebola are *extremely low* unless a person has traveled to an affected area *and / or* had direct contact with the blood or body fluids (including but not limited to vomit, sweat, saliva, urine, feces, breast milk and semen) of an Ebola-infected person, or with objects soiled with that person's blood or body fluids.
- **Individuals who are not symptomatic are not contagious.**
- Ebola can only be spread by direct contact with blood or body fluids when the virus enters the body through broken skin or mucous membranes such as the eyes, nose or mouth.
- Ebola is not spread by air. It is not a respiratory illness like many flu or measles viruses that can be transmitted by air particles after an infected person coughs or sneezes. Coughing and sneezing are not common symptoms of Ebola. However, if a person with Ebola coughs or sneezes on someone, and saliva or mucous come in contact with that person's eyes, nose or mouth, these body fluids may transmit the disease.

- Ebola is not spread by water or in general, by food. However in Africa, Ebola may be spread as a result of handling bush meat (wild animals hunted for food).
- There is no evidence that mosquitoes or other insects can transmit the Ebola virus. Only mammals (for example, humans, bats, monkeys and apes) have shown the ability to become infected with Ebola and spread the disease.
- Health care workers caring for Ebola patients and the family and friends in close contact with Ebola patients are at the highest risk of getting sick because they may come in contact with infected blood or body fluids of sick patients.
- Signs and symptoms of the disease may occur 2 to 21 days from exposure, although 8 to 10 days is most common.
- Early Ebola symptoms can include fever, headache, muscle pain, vomiting, diarrhea, and stomach pain.
- Fever in people who traveled to the affected areas is most likely due to more common infectious diseases in West Africa, but should still be checked by a doctor.

### **Ebola Preparedness Planning:**

The DPH has been closely monitoring the Ebola outbreak in West Africa and receiving guidance from the CDC. The DPH has also sent regular Ebola-related updates and guidance to medical professionals, local health directors, hospitals and emergency medical service providers.

In addition the DPH is working closely with all Connecticut hospitals to ensure they can identify a patient with Ebola, protect health care workers so they can safely care for any patients, and respond in a coordinated manner.

**Also be aware that the Governor of Connecticut and the Commissioner of Health of the Connecticut Department of Public Health have implemented a policy that is more stringent than the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommendations.**

*All people* who arrive in the state of Connecticut from an Ebola-affected area will ***be subject to 21 days of active mandatory monitoring***. This means that DPH will review each case and determine if additional steps are necessary based upon a person's travel history and potential exposure. Under active monitoring, local health department staff will contact individuals twice daily to check the temperature results they have recorded. As soon as a person develops early symptoms, such as a fever, the state's isolation procedure will be implemented to prevent any possible spread of the disease.

Due to these requirements, the chance of encountering individuals in Connecticut who are infected with Ebola is lessened.

If you have questions or concerns about Ebola, please call the New Milford Health Department at 860-355-6035 or visit [www.newmilfordhealth.org](http://www.newmilfordhealth.org).