



State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

DIVISION OF EPIDEMIOLOGY, ENVIRONMENTAL AND OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH

PO BOX 369

TRENTON, N.J. 08625-0369

CHRIS CHRISTIE
Governor

www.nj.gov/health

KIM GUADAGNO
Lt. Governor

MARY E. O'DOWD, M.P.H.
Commissioner

Guidance on Handling Pets That May Have Been Exposed to the Ebola Virus

June 2015

The New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) collaborated with the New Jersey Department of Agriculture (NJDA) to develop guidance on the handling of pets potentially exposed to, or kept in households with person infected with, Ebola virus disease (EVD).

Ebola virus and pets

There have been no reports of dogs or cats becoming sick with EVD or being able to spread the virus to people anywhere in the world. However, it is prudent to ensure that dogs, cats and other pets are prevented from coming into contact with blood or bodily fluids from persons infected with EVD.

There is no evidence that Ebola virus can infect non-mammal pets, including birds, reptiles, amphibians and fish.

Certain exotic pets (i.e., monkeys, apes or pigs) have a higher risk of becoming infected with and then shedding the Ebola virus. Person potentially exposed to Ebola virus should not have any contact with these exotic pets for 21 days since last exposure.

Persons under investigation for EVD

When a local health department is notified that a symptomatic person under investigation (PUI) for EVD is confirmed positive, they should investigate to determine the type and number of pets in the home and other activities of the PUI that involve contact with animals (i.e., occupations, hobbies, farm or zoo visits or work with service animals). Collecting this information will guide local and state health authorities to determine the management of any exposed animals.

Persons under active monitoring

Dogs, cats and most other pets can remain in the household where people under active monitoring are staying but all primates or pigs should be removed from the household. Actively monitored persons should be instructed to immediately self-isolate if they become symptomatic out of an abundance of caution to prevent any possible transmission of Ebola virus from people to animals. If the patient is confirmed with EVD, all people and pets that may have had contact with the patient's blood or bodily fluids should be identified and evaluated by local and State public health officials. Exposed animals may be placed into quarantine for 21 days or euthanized.

Persons under direct active monitoring

People under direct active monitoring should have only limited contact with non-human mammals (dogs, cats, livestock, etc.) and also immediately self-isolate if they become symptomatic out of an abundance of caution to prevent any possible transmission of Ebola virus

from people to animals. This precaution may also prevent the need to quarantine animals later should the monitored person develop EVD.

Persons under Quarantine

Persons under quarantine should avoid all contact with animals. Indoor pets should be removed from all areas where the quarantined person will reside and be cared for by another party until the 21 day monitoring/quarantine period ends. If this is not possible and pets remains elsewhere in the home, they should not be allowed to have any contact with the quarantined person or his or her blood or bodily fluids at any time. If the quarantined person becomes symptomatic, they must immediately self-isolate. If quarantined person is confirmed with EVD, a risk assessment shall be conducted to determine if pets were exposed to the Ebola virus and need to be euthanized or quarantined.

Pet Quarantine

Pets considered exposed to the Ebola virus shall be either strictly quarantined or euthanized. Pet quarantine will be for a minimum of 21 days and requires a dedicated, secure facility and well trained emergency responders to provide care to the animals while utilizing rigorous personal protective equipment.

Quarantine of pets can be avoided by preventing pets from any contact with persons under direct active monitoring or quarantine.

Only one dog (in Texas) has been placed into quarantine in the United States for Ebola virus exposure. Veterinarians trained in emergency response from Texas A&M University, College of Veterinary Medicine were utilized to provide daily care to the quarantined dog. The dog remained health throughout the 21 day quarantine and has been reunited with its owner. Reportedly the cost of this 21 day quarantine was over \$155,000. Almost \$60,000 of that cost was fees from handling and disposal of hazardous waste.

Because New Jersey does not have a school of veterinary medicine to provide trained personnel and other necessary resources, quarantining a pet for EVD exposure here would pose many significant challenges.

Animal-Related EVD resources

U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

<http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/transmission/qas-pets.html>

American Veterinary Medical Association:

https://www.avma.org/KB/Resources/Reference/Pages/Ebola-virus.aspx?utm_source=prettyurl&utm_medium=print&utm_campaign=mktg&utm_term=ebola

New Jersey Department of Agriculture: <http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/transmission/qas-pets.html>