



South Central Public Health District

Prevent. Promote. Protect.

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VIRAL HEMORRHAGIC FEVERS (VHF) HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

In the event of an intentional release of a virus that causes a viral hemorrhagic fever, many people may require hospitalization within a few days. Hospitals may soon become overwhelmed and unable to care for every person who seeks treatment. It may become necessary for many sick people to be cared for in their home by relatives and friends. The following information may be helpful in providing care to sick persons at home:

- Listen closely to the local radio or television for special instructions from your local health department. Advise friends and relatives not to visit.
- Wear a mask when you are in close contact with an infected person who is coughing or bleeding from areas of their body.
- Wear disposable gloves (vinyl or latex) when you have contact with the infected person's blood and other body fluids (urine, vomit, drainage, mucous, or saliva). Place the gloves in a waste receptacle after each use. Do not wash or reuse gloves. If disposable gloves are not available, place plastic bags on your hands and secure with an elastic band. Wash your hands with soap and water after removing gloves.
- Wash your hands with soap and water before you eat or drink, after using the bathroom, and after contact with the sick person.
- Wash the sick person's hands after they use the bathroom, before they eat or drink, and after contact with pets.
- After the sick person uses the toilet or after pouring blood or other body fluids into the toilet, pour 1 cup of household bleach into the toilet, wait for 5 minutes and then flush the toilet.
- If an antibiotic is recommended, give it exactly as prescribed. If an allergic reaction occurs, get medical help immediately.
- Take the person's temperature at least twice a day. If their temperature goes above 100.4° F, give Tylenol (if not allergic). **Do not give the person aspirin.** Follow directions on the package insert. If their temperature is not controlled by the medicine, call your health care provider or take the person to the nearest designated emergency center or hospital.
- If the person is having trouble breathing, go immediately to the nearest designated emergency center or hospital.
- Give the person plenty of fluids such as water or juice. Allow the person to eat solid food as tolerated.
- Change the sick person's clothes and bed linens frequently, especially if soiled with blood or body fluids. Wear gloves and a gown if the linen is soiled.
- Wash soiled clothes and bed linens in warm water using any commercial laundry product.
- Disinfect the bathroom and kitchen with a disinfectant such as Lysol every day or when surfaces become soiled with blood or other body fluids.
- As the caregiver, you must take care of yourself. Get plenty of rest, drink fluids frequently, and eat a healthy diet. Even if you are not taking an antibiotic, take your temperature in the morning and afternoon for three weeks. If you develop a fever above 100.4° F or if you have shortness of breath, seek medical attention immediately.