

Management of Animals Exposed to Ebola Virus

The ongoing epidemic of Ebola in West Africa has raised several questions about how the disease affects the animal population, and in particular, the risk to household pets¹. While the information available suggests that the virus may be found in several kinds of animals, the CDC, the US Department of Agriculture (USDA), and the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) do not believe that pets are at significant risk for Ebola in the United States¹.

The following guidance is provided to manage animals exposed to the Ebola virus. This guidance will be updated as new information is made available by the CDC, USDA, and AVMA.

Exposure Defined As:

An animal will be considered exposed if it has been in direct contact with a person with confirmed Ebola virus infection from the onset of symptoms of the disease in the person.

Quarantine and Handling Procedures:

The animal will be quarantined for a minimum of 21 days. The following management procedures will be observed:

1. The animal will be quarantined in the residence of the patient with confirmed Ebola virus disease. The animal should be confined to the home and only allowed outside to urinate or defecate. When outside, the animal will be kept on a leash. Solid waste should be removed and disposed of in a waste receptacle. The waste can be disposed of through regular trash removal.
2. Humans who are household contacts of the confirmed Ebola patient, and who live in the residence of the patient, should care for the animal contact(s). Exposure to the animal should be minimized. If the patient does not have another caregiver for the animal, it will be quarantined at an alternate location determined by KDHE or the local health officer.
3. Monitor the animal daily for changes in behavior or health for 21 days following the last potential exposure.
 - a. Potential signs of illness include decreased appetite, lethargy, vomiting, and diarrhea.
 - b. Report any change in behavior or health immediately to KDHE at 1-877-427-7317.
 - c. The animal will be evaluated by a veterinarian to determine the cause of illness. If the veterinarian cannot rule out Ebola virus infection, KDHE will then consult with the CDC for diagnostic recommendations.

Release of Animal from Quarantine:

The animal will be released from quarantine after 21 days, or more, as long as the animal appears clinically normal. There are currently no approved diagnostic tests for pets for Ebola virus infection; therefore, testing is not recommended at this time. Final disposition of the animal will be determined by the Kansas Animal Health Commissioner and the Secretary of KDHE.

References

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Questions and Answers about Ebola and Pets*. Accessed on October 15, 2014 at; <http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/transmission/qas-pets.html>.
2. Allela, L., Bourry, O., Pouillot, R., et al. *Ebola Virus Antibody Prevalence in Dogs and Human Risk*. *Emerging Infectious Diseases*. 2005: 11(3); 385-390.

Additional Information

For additional information, refer to the CDC Ebola web page (available from www.cdc.gov) or contact the KDHE Epidemiology Hotline at 877-427-7317.