This is an update on Ebola to help you understand what it is, and what it isn’t, as you move forward with your work in Spain. Ebola has certainly been on the news since this most recent case occurred in Spain and I hope that by providing you with more information about this virus you will understand it better. Ebola is real and it can be scary but it is also fragile and with basic precautions can be managed.

The first thing to understand is that Ebola is extremely difficult to contract. The virus is easily killed by contact with soap, bleach, hand sanitizer, sunlight and drying. Ebola is only transmitted through blood and bodily fluids. Medical professionals stated that because the Ebola virus is transmitted via bodily fluids, travelers are at an overall low risk of infection. As you have likely seen, the presence of a case of Ebola does not bring life to a crashing halt. Ebola in most circumstances is not actually challenging to manage: “We do know how to stop Ebola. Its old-fashioned plain and simple public health: find the patients, make sure they get treated, find their contacts, track them, educate people and do infection control in hospitals,” said Thomas Frieden, Director, CDC. The circumstances in a few countries in West Africa that created an environment that precluded proper management do not exist in Spain. We have every confidence in the ability of the Spanish authorities to properly manage the appearance of Ebola in Spain. For you the best guidance would be to practice proper hygiene and cleanliness, follow the maxim taught in medical school about fluids, “if it is not your fluid, don’t touch it” and don’t have direct bodily contact with any actively ill.

But to share with you what experts and authoritative sources have said about Ebola here are some excerpts from their information and fact sheets:

The U.S. Department of State medical experts note that:

- The most likely natural reservoir for Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) is fruit bats.
- EVD in humans is thought to be through contact with infected bats or primates (such as monkey, chimpanzees and gorillas) that have become infected by bats.
- EVD has not been transmitted from beef, pork, lamb or chicken, even if it is undercooked.
- Human to human EVD transmission is only achieved by physical contact with a person or his/her body fluids. Infectious patients must be acutely and gravely ill showing all the symptoms of the Ebola virus.
- EVD transmission among humans is almost exclusively among health care workers (or family members) who are providing care for the very ill with little or no infection control protection such as gloves. Handling and touching of the deceased from EVD has also been associated with secondary cases.
• Ebola virus is easily killed by contact with soap, bleach, hand sanitizer, sunlight, or drying. Machine washing of clothes that have been contaminated with fluids will destroy Ebola virus. Ebola virus survives only a short time on surfaces that are in the sun or have dried.
• You cannot contract Ebola virus by handling money, groceries or swimming in a pool.
• Mosquitoes do not transmit EVD.
• Humans may incubate Ebola virus without symptoms for two to 21 days, (the average being five to eight days before becoming ill). PEOPLE ARE NOT CONTAGIOUS during this period.
• Only when a person becomes ill will Ebola virus be found in the blood, and subsequently other bodily fluids (including vomit, feces, urine, breast milk, semen and sweat).
• Those sick enough to transmit EVD are usually bedridden and not walking around.
• Furthermore, Ebola virus is not transmitted by respiratory secretions like influenza and is not transmitted in casual settings.
• During previous outbreaks in Africa, children living for days in small huts with parents who died from Ebola virus did not become infected if they did not touch their ill parents.
• Good hand washing techniques are recommended at all times to diminish infections and should be emphasized during outbreaks of disease.
• There is no medical indication to stop flights, close borders, restrict travel or close businesses, schools or embassies (specifically consular sections may remain open). Routine school, business and social activities can be safely continued during an outbreak of EVD as long as basic precautions are taken.

Is it safe to travel during an outbreak? What is WHO’s travel advice?

During an outbreak, WHO reviews the public health situation regularly, and recommends any travel or trade restrictions if necessary and as of July 15th, 2014 there are no such restrictions. The risk of infection for travelers is very low since person-to-person transmission results only from direct contact with the body fluids or secretions of an infected patient.

Key Messages for travelers about Ebola from WHO
• Ebola Virus Disease is rare.
• The risk of infection for travelers is very low since person-to-person transmission results only from direct contact with the body fluids or secretions of an infected patient.
• Infection is by contact with blood or body fluids of an infected person or an infected animal infected or by contact with objects contaminated by these fluids.
• Symptoms include fever, weakness, muscle pain, headache and sore throat. This is followed by vomiting, diarrhea, rash, and in some cases, bleeding.
• Persons who come into direct contact with body fluids of an infected person or animal are at risk.
• There is no licensed vaccine.
• Practice careful hygiene.
• Avoid all contact with blood and body fluids of infected people or animals.
• Do not handle items that may have come in contact with an infected person’s blood or body fluids.
• If you have been exposed to Ebola cases which have been recently reported, seek medical attention if you feel sick (fever, headache, achiness, sore throat, diarrhea, vomiting, stomach pain, rash, or red eyes).

To better understand this disease read through the links that describe in very great detail all the facts about this disease.

For more information on Ebola hemorrhagic fever, please visit the CDC website: www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola.


Other: https://www.internationalsos.com/ebola/ http://www.one.org/international/blog/5-infographics-that-explain-the-ebola-outbreak/

Take the free online Ebola Awareness Course in www.disasterready.org

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