FAQs: Animals and Ebola

Can dogs become infected with Ebola?
Very little is known about how dogs or other animals respond to Ebola virus. Studies on dogs in West Africa have shown that dogs develop antibodies when exposed to Ebola, suggesting that they may develop mild infections without becoming sick.1

Are dogs involved with the transmission of Ebola?
Ebola is nearly always spread by direct human to human contact. Dogs and other domestic animals do not appear to be involved in the spread of Ebola virus in the current outbreak.

Should exposed dogs be quarantined?
We don’t know if animals can shed Ebola virus after they’ve been exposed. It is possible that dogs or other animals could shed virus for a short period of time after exposure even if they don’t get sick.1 Because little is known about potential hosts of Ebola virus, it is reasonable to quarantine any mammal that has had close contact with a human Ebola patient including dogs, cats, pet rodents and horses.2,3

Should we worry about wild animals spreading Ebola?
Most primates (monkeys and apes) appear susceptible to Ebola virus. Because there are no wild populations of non-human primates in North America, these animals are very unlikely to have exposure to Ebola. Certain species of fruit bats may carry Ebola virus in Africa,4 but these bats do not exist in the wild in North America. Ebola virus is not present in North American bats or other wildlife in North America.

What about pigs and other farm animals?
Little is known about how Ebola virus could affect other animals, but currently Ebola virus is not found in any pigs or other domestic livestock in North America. Pigs can become sick after being experimentally infected with high doses of Ebola virus. There is little risk that pigs could come in contact with Ebola virus in North America.5,7

Where can I go to learn more?
If you’re concerned about an unexplained illness in your dog or cat – talk to your veterinarian. While Ebola is not a likely cause, there are many diseases or conditions that cause sudden illness and bleeding in pets, and these need to be investigated quickly.

If you’ve witnessed unexplained illness or death in wildlife – contact your local DNR office. Never approach injured or ill wildlife yourself. We are unlikely to ever see Ebola in wildlife in North America, but wild animals can harbor numerous other diseases that affect people. Contact your local DNR office if you’re witnessing unexplained wildlife deaths.

Resources:
To stay informed on Ebola cases in the U.S. and abroad-visit the websites of the
U.S. Center for Disease Control (CDC)
http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/ and

World Health Organization
http://www.who.int/csr/disease/ebola/en/

For information about pets and Ebola see either the CDC website or the AVMA website.
http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/transmission/qas-pets.html

www.avma.org/ebola

This fact sheet is meant to provide basic information.
For specific health concerns please contact your health care provider or veterinarian. Updated 2014.
References


