

Best-In-Class Thoughts

*"An ounce of prevention is worth
a pound of cure."*

— Benjamin Franklin

*"The aim of medicine is to
prevent disease and prolong life,
the ideal of medicine is to
eliminate the need of a
physician."*

— William James Mayo

*"Proper handwashing with soap
and water is an important barrier
to many infectious diseases and
promotes better health and well-
being...handwashing is one of
the most practical and effective
ways of preventing the spread of
disease."*

— World Health Organization
(WHO)



Leanne Stegman, Vice President of Safety and Training
ASSE Professional Development Conference

this issue

Note from Leanne **P.1**

Ebola Safety **P.2**

Holiday Stress **P.3**

Illness Prevention **P.4**

Note from Leanne

On September 30th, the Center of Disease Control (CDC) reported the first laboratory-confirmed case of Ebola in the United States. By October 15th, the US had our second and third confirmed cases: two of the nurses who had provided medical care to the first patient had contracted Ebola. Just 15 days after the first case of this relatively unknown deadly disease was diagnosed in the United States, our country was in pure panic mode.

During this time, the MER Family of Companies began receiving calls inquiring about our Ebola-specific response and containment capabilities. Some of the largest companies in the US wanted to know how we could help them if they had to deal with a suspected or confirmed Ebola-contamination event. Hospitals were looking for guidance on decontamination procedures and clients were asking us to provide support in reviewing their current programs for compliance and effectiveness.

As an organization that takes pride in our preparedness and emergency response planning, the MER Family of Companies was already hard at work updating our Bloodborne Pathogen program to specifically address Ebola. We were already educating our employees on proper Ebola-contamination response procedures and we were already ensuring that our company had the resources necessary to provide our clients with a Best-in-Class response.

As we've done so many times in the past, the MER Family of Companies performed best under pressure and proved once again that we are phenomenal at crisis management. To all those involved in the Ebola-preparedness exercise: thank you for your hard work and dedication throughout that very intense period of time. It's because of you and your commitment to Best-in-Class that our clients continue to look to us for help in their greatest of time of need.

Facts about Ebola

You can't get Ebola
through air



You can't get Ebola
through water



You can't get Ebola
through food



**Top 10 Things
You REALLY Need to Know about EBOLA**

10 Your dog or cat is not spreading Ebola.

There have been no reports of dogs or cats becoming sick with Ebola or of being able to spread Ebola to people or other animals. Because the risk of an Ebola outbreak spreading rapidly in the United States is very low, the risk to pets is also very low, too.

9 Food and drinks imported into the U.S. from West Africa are safe to eat and drink.

No one has been infected with Ebola from foods that are imported into the United States to date. You can't get Ebola from food grown or legally purchased in the United States.

8 Mosquitoes are the deadliest animals in the world, but they don't carry Ebola.

There have been no reports of mosquitoes or other insects transmitting Ebola virus. Only mammals (for example, humans, bats, monkeys, and apes) have become infected with Ebola virus and spread it. Mosquitoes do carry other organisms, like malaria and West Nile virus, that can make people very sick, and sometimes even cause death.

7 Family, coworkers, and neighbors returning from countries with Ebola outbreaks don't pose a danger to you and your family.

Ebola is spread through direct contact with blood or body fluids (including but not limited to urine, saliva, sweat, feces, vomit, breast milk, and semen) from a person sick with Ebola. Not everyone coming from countries with Ebola outbreaks has been in contact with someone who has Ebola. Travelers coming from countries with a large Ebola outbreak will be given a CARE (Check and Report Ebola) kit at the airport to help monitor themselves for Ebola symptoms. In addition, they will be actively monitored, meaning they are checked on at least once a day by public health officials. It's safe for you and your family to be around people being monitored as long as they do not have signs or symptoms of Ebola.

6 Household bleach and other disinfectants kill Ebola.

Household bleach or an EPA-registered hospital disinfectant will kill Ebola.

5 If you're feeling sick, think flu not Ebola.

Although flu and Ebola have some similar symptoms, Ebola is rare disease, particularly in the U.S. Flu is very common. To date, four cases of Ebola have been detected in the U.S., and two of those were imported from West Africa. Every year in the U.S., millions of people are infected with flu, hundreds of thousands are hospitalized, and tens of thousands die from flu. Unless you have had direct contact with someone who is sick with Ebola, your symptoms are most likely caused by flu and you do not have Ebola.

4 Ebola is not airborne.

Ebola is not a respiratory disease and is not spread through the airborne route. There is no evidence that Ebola is spread by coughing or sneezing. Ebola might be spread through large droplets (splashes or sprays) but only when a person is very sick. That's why hospital workers must wear PPE around people with Ebola to stay safe.

3 The Ebola outbreak is not affecting the safety of airline travel.

Airline travelers in the U.S. are extremely unlikely to become infected with Ebola. All travelers coming from Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea, or Mali, arrive at one of five airports in the U.S. where entry screening by Customs and Border Protection and CDC is taking place.

2 Ebola is only spread from one person to another once symptoms begin.

Symptoms of Ebola appear from 2 to 21 days (average 8 to 10 days) after being exposed. A person infected with Ebola cannot spread it to others until symptoms begin.

1 You can't get Ebola from a handshake or a hug.

Ebola is spread through direct contact with body fluids from a person sick with Ebola. Direct contact means that blood or body fluids (including but not limited to urine, saliva, sweat, feces, vomit, breast milk, and semen) from an infected person (alive or dead) have touched another person's eyes, nose, or mouth, or an open cut or wound.

Ebola Safety

What is Ebola?

Ebola is a rare and deadly disease caused by infection with one of the Ebola virus strains. Ebola is spread through direct contact with blood or body fluids (including but not limited to urine, saliva, sweat, feces, vomit, breast milk, and semen) from a person who contracted Ebola and is showing symptoms.

Symptoms may appear anywhere from 2 to 21 days after exposure to Ebola and include: fever, severe headache, fatigue, muscle pain, weakness, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, and/or unexplained hemorrhage (bleeding or bruising).

Currently, there is no FDA-approved vaccine available for Ebola, making prevention crucial. Risk reduction should focus on:

- Reducing the risk of human-to-human transmission from direct or close contact with people with Ebola symptoms, particularly with their bodily fluids.
- Outbreak containment measures including identifying people who may have been in contact with someone infected with Ebola, monitoring the health of contacts for 21 days, separating the healthy from the sick to prevent further spread, good hygiene and maintaining a clean environment.

MER and Ebola.

MER recently provided additional training to employees that may be involved in cleanup operations associated with suspected Ebola-contaminated areas, including proper decon procedures. For MER employees, exposure prevention is vital during cleanup operations; this includes preventing contact with bodily fluids, wearing gloves and appropriate personal protective equipment, as well as proper hygiene practices during the decontamination process.

www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs103/en/

There's an App for that!

Can I Eat This?
CDC



Montezuma's revenge, Delhi belly, or travelers' diarrhea—whatever you call it, illness from unclean food or water can ruin your international trip.

Help prevent travelers' diarrhea and other illnesses with this app.



Holiday Stress

In Great Britain the word "holiday" has the same meaning as vacation. Many Americans would find this comparison laughable. For most of us, the holidays come with our own "to-do" lists.

Too often we take holiday stress for granted. Planning for the holidays can leave us feeling impatient, cranky, and — in some cases — depressed. When the realities of day-to-day life conflict with our efforts to make the holiday season perfect, stress results.

Tips to Prevent Holiday Stress and Depression

Acknowledge your feelings. If someone close to you has recently died or you can't be with loved ones, realize that it's normal to feel sadness and grief. It's OK to take time to cry or express your feelings. You can't force yourself to be happy just because it's the holiday season.

Reach out. If you feel lonely or isolated, seek out community, religious or other social events. They can offer support and companionship. Volunteering your time to help others also is a good way to lift your spirits and broaden your friendships.

Be realistic. The holidays don't have to be perfect or just like last year. As families change and grow, traditions and rituals often change as well. Choose a few to hold on to, and be open to creating new ones. For example, if your adult children can't come to your house, find new ways to celebrate together, such as sharing pictures, emails or videos.

Set aside differences. Try to accept family members and friends as they are. Be understanding if others get upset or distressed when something goes awry; chances are they're feeling the effects of holiday stress and depression, too.

Stick to a budget. Before you go gift and food shopping, decide how much money you can afford to spend, and then stick to your budget. Don't try to buy happiness with an avalanche of gifts. You can also try alternatives such as donating to a charity in someone's name, giving homemade gifts or starting a family gift exchange.

Plan ahead. Set aside specific days for shopping, baking, visiting friends and other activities. Plan your menus and then make your shopping list to prevent last minute scrambling. Make sure to line up help for party prep and cleanup.

Learn to say no. Saying yes when you should say no can leave you feeling resentful and overwhelmed. Friends and colleagues will understand if you can't participate in every project or activity. If it's not possible to say no when your boss asks you to work overtime, try to remove something else from your agenda to make up for the lost time.

Don't abandon healthy habits. Don't let the holidays become a free-for-all; overindulgence only adds to your stress and guilt. Ensure you get plenty of sleep and incorporate regular physical activity into each day. Also, try having a healthy snack before holiday parties so that you don't go overboard.

Take a breather. Make some time for yourself. Spending just 15 minutes alone, without distractions, may refresh you enough to handle everything you need to do. Find something that reduces stress by clearing your mind, slowing your breathing and restoring inner calm. Some options may include: taking a walk at night and stargazing, listening to soothing music, getting a massage, or reading a book.

Seek professional help if you need it.

www.mayoclinic.org



Fitness Challenge Quick Holiday Workout

15 minute Interval Hill Climb

- Minute 1: 30 sec. Mountain Climbers/30 sec. Rest
- Minute 2: 40 sec. Mountain Climbers/20 sec. Rest
- Minute 3: 50 sec. Mountain Climbers/10 sec. Rest
- Minute 4: 30 sec. Jack Knife Crunch/30 sec. Rest
- Minute 5: 40 sec. Jack Knife Crunch/20 sec. Rest
- Minute 6: 50 sec. Jack Knife Crunch/10 sec. Rest
- Minute 7: 30 sec. Push Ups/30 sec. Rest
- Minute 8: 40 sec. Push Ups/20 sec. Rest
- Minute 9: 50 sec. Push Ups/10 sec. Rest
- Minute 10: 30 sec. Jump Squats/30 sec. Rest
- Minute 11: 40 sec. Jump Squats/20 sec. Rest
- Minute 12: 50 sec. Jump Squats/10 sec. Rest
- Minute 13: 30 sec. Plank Rotation/30 sec. Rest
- Minute 14: 40 sec. Plank Rotation/20 sec. Rest
- Minute 15: 50 sec. Plank Rotation/10 sec. Rest

www.wemelyou.com/quick-holiday-workouts-burn-forward/





Illness Prevention

It's that time of year again: nope, not the holiday season. It's flu season! According to the CDC, the peak of flu season lies between the months of December and February; as we enter into that peak time, here are some tips to help prevent the spread of germs and protect you and those around you from getting sick:



Values

Professionalism

Integrity

Mutual Respect

Discipline

- Get vaccinated – the seasonal flu vaccine will help protect you against the influenza virus that will be most common during the upcoming season
- Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing

- Wash your hands – follow proper hand washing techniques as taught in our BBP training
- Stay home when you are sick – it can be hard when we have so much going on at work and so many things to do outside of work (shopping, parties etc.), but staying home will help prevent you from spreading your illness and will also help protect you from getting sicker. Don't forget, when you're sick, your immune system is compromised so you're vulnerable to additional illness.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that may be contaminated with germs.
- Try not to share objects such as phones, eating utensils and pens. These are all items that people use in close proximity to their mouths and that have a very high probability of being contaminated.



Employee Development Corner

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

Holidays can be an exciting and stressful time. As a reminder MER offers the

services of an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) through Employee Connect at no cost to the employee. Usage of this benefit is voluntary and strictly confidential between the employee and Employee Connect unless the employee provides written consent to share information. Licensed counselors can assist with a wide range of issues such as job or work stress, parenting, relationship problems, alcohol/ substance abuse, anxiety/ depression, legal issues, financial issues, grief or bereavement. For more information check out the Employee Handbook or contact the Human Resources Team.

It's OK to get help



MORAN ENVIRONMENTAL
RECOVERY LLC

Safety Brief

PHONE
(251) 284-1525

FAX
(866) 311-4762

EMAIL
safety@
moranenvironmental.com

To receive the Monthly Safety Brief via email, send request to the address above.

