UK Health Security Agency

Designated contact number:
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Severe fever with thrombocytopaenia syndrome (SFTS): information sheet for category 1 contacts

You have been given this information sheet because you have been in possible contact with a case of severe fever with thrombocytopaenia syndrome (SFTS). Your contact has been assessed as very low risk, so it is very unlikely that you have caught SFTS virus, and you can continue your usual activities. However, as a precaution, if you feel unwell with a fever (temperature of 37.5°C or higher) or other symptoms suggestive of SFTS within 14 days of your last possible exposure to someone infected with SFTS virus, call NHS 111 and tell them that you have been in possible contact with an individual infected with SFTS virus.

About SFTS

SFTS is a rare but serious disease caused by severe fever with thrombocytopaenia syndrome virus. SFTS virus infection in humans has been reported from countries including China, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand and Vietnam. SFTS virus is not found in the UK.

How SFTS virus spreads

SFTS virus can spread by:

- direct contact with the organs, blood, secretions, or other body fluids of an infected person
- contact with objects or materials contaminated with blood, secretions, or other body fluids from an infected person
- bites from infected ticks, or direct handling of infected ticks or animals in affected countries

SFTS virus is not spread through routine, social contact such as shaking hands or sitting next to someone who does not have symptoms.

It can take up to 14 days after exposure to the virus for symptoms to develop.

Symptoms of SFTS

The illness begins with symptoms including:

- fever
- tiredness
- headache
- body aches
- dry cough
- sore throat
- nausea
- vomiting
- diarrhoea
- abdominal pain

In more severe illness symptoms can include bruising and bleeding and neurological (nervous system) symptoms such as:

- sensitivity to light or sound
- neck stiffness
- seizures
- reduced consciousness (for example, drowsiness)

Preventing and treating SFTS

There is currently no licensed vaccine for SFTS. To avoid SFTS virus spreading between people, those caring for individuals with possible or suspected SFTS should avoid contact with the patient's body fluids and should wear personal protective equipment (PPE).

Treatment for SFTS is with supportive care, including replacing blood components, balancing fluids and electrolytes, maintaining a person's oxygen status and blood pressure, and treating any co-infections.

Your risk of developing SFTS

You are not considered to be at risk of having caught SFTS virus. This is because although you have had contact with someone known to have SFTS virus infection, their body fluids, or potentially infectious materials, you have not:

- been within 2 metres of, or had direct contact with someone known to have SFTS without appropriate PPE, while they had symptoms
- been in direct contact with the body fluids (or items contaminated with body fluids, such as bedding) from someone known to have SFTS while they had symptoms, without appropriate PPE

- been in direct contact with the body of someone who died who was known to have SFTS, without appropriate PPE

Your family and household contacts are not at risk of catching SFTS virus from you. There are no restrictions on your activities, and there are no monitoring or reporting requirements.

What to do if you feel unwell

It is very unlikely that you have caught SFTS virus. However, if you feel unwell with any of the symptoms of SFTS as listed above within 14 days of your last contact with an individual with SFTS, **stay at home**.

If you have a thermometer, take your temperature before taking any medication that can reduce your temperature, such as aspirin, paracetamol, or ibuprofen.

After taking your temperature, call NHS 111 and tell them that you have had possible contact with SFTS virus. Let them know if your temperature is 37.5°C or higher. They will arrange for you to be assessed by an appropriate clinician.

In an emergency, you should call 999 and tell them about your symptoms and that you have had possible contact with SFTS virus.

Your designated contact number is –	Delete this text and type number

More information

More information about SFTS can be found at:

- SFTS: epidemiology, outbreaks and guidance (https://www.gov.uk/guidance/severe-fever-with-thrombocytopaenia-syndrome-sfts-epidemiology-outbreaks-and-guidancev)

Document information

Version 1.0. October 2026