UK Health Security Agency

Designated contact number:
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Severe fever with thrombocytopaenia syndrome (SFTS): information sheet for category 2 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). As your exposure has been assessed as low risk, it is very unlikely that you have caught SFTS virus, and you can continue your usual activities. However, as a precaution, you should monitor yourself for 14 days from your last possible exposure to SFTS virus. If you feel unwell with a fever (temperature of 37.5°C or higher) or other symptoms suggestive of SFTS contact your designated contact immediately.

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 from contact with someone who has 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

Your risk of becoming infected with SFTS virus is considered to be at low risk. This is because you reported one of the following:

- you had direct or close contact with someone with SFTS, or their body fluids, outside of a designated high level isolation unit, but you were wearing appropriate PPE and there were no known breaches
- you were in an environment contaminated with the body fluids of someone who had SFTS, but you were wearing appropriate PPE and there were no known breaches

- you have had contact with SFTS virus in a laboratory that did not meet containment level 4 requirements, but usual laboratory practices were followed and you were wearing appropriate PPE with no known breaches

We would like to monitor you for 14 days from your last possible exposure to SFTS virus. This means that we can act quickly if you develop symptoms, reducing the risk to you and to others.

What you need to do for 14 days

Your family and household contacts are not at risk of catching SFTS virus from you if you do not have any symptoms.

You should take the following actions for 14 days from when you were last exposed to SFTS virus:

- check and record your temperature **twice per day at the same times each day** (for example once in the morning and once in the evening)
- monitor yourself for other symptoms of SFTS (as listed above)
- contact your designated contact (see below for their details) if you develop a temperature of 37.5°C or higher, or other symptoms of SFTS. They will arrange for you to be assessed and explain the local arrangements for accessing healthcare
- there are no restrictions on work, travel or social activities as long as you have no symptoms
- do not share towels, bed linen, toothbrushes or razors
- use barrier contraception or avoid unprotected sexual contact with other people
- postpone any non-essential medical or dental treatment, including vaccination. If you need essential medical or dental treatment, tell your healthcare provider about your possible exposure to SFTS virus

Use of medicines such as aspirin, paracetamol or ibuprofen

Medicines, such as aspirin, paracetamol, and ibuprofen, can reduce your body temperature during a fever (antipyretic) for up to 8 hours. Thermometer measurements may therefore show a lower temperature than would be expected for up to 8 hours after taking these medicines.

You must call your designated contact for further advice if you need to take an antipyretic medicine.

Please take your temperature before you take aspirin, paracetamol or ibuprofen. If your temperature is 37.5°C or higher, you must call your contact immediately.

A temperature of 37.5°C or higher is always significant, whether you are taking one of these medicines or not, and must be reported urgently.

What to do if you feel unwell

It is unlikely that you have caught SFTS virus. However, if you are feeling unwell or develop any of the symptoms of SFTS (including a temperature of 37.5°C or higher) within 14 days of your last possible exposure to SFTS virus, **stay at home**. Take your temperature if you have not done so and contact your **designated contact immediately** (see below for details). They will arrange for you to be assessed by an appropriate clinician.

If there is any delay in making contact, phone 111 reporting your recent contact with someone with SFTS.

In an emergency, you should call 999 and tell them about your symptoms and your recent contact with SFTS.

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-guidance)

Document information

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