UK Health Security Agency

Designated contact number:
Delete this text and type number

Severe fever with thrombocytopaenia syndrome (SFTS): information sheet for category 5 contacts

You have been given this information sheet because you have had very close or direct contact with someone with severe fever with thrombocytopaenia syndrome (SFTS). You should **stay at home** and away from other people for 14 days after your last exposure to SFTS virus and regularly check yourself for symptoms of SFTS. If you develop symptoms of SFTS during this period, contact your designated contact immediately (see below for details).

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

Some individuals with more severe illness can progress to bruising and bleeding and neurological (nervous system) symptoms including:

- 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 reported that (one of the following):

- you are a household or overnight contact of a confirmed symptomatic case
- you have had significant exposure to material from an SFTS case, for example a needlestick injury or direct contact of mucous membranes or broken skin with an SFTS case or their body fluids (for example, blood, vomit, faeces, urine, saliva) whilst they were symptomatic – this includes sexual contact

Because of your level of exposure, you are at very high risk of developing SFTS. We would therefore like to closely monitor you for a period of 14 days from when you were last exposed to an individual with SFTS. You should also carry out the actions listed below to minimise the risk to you and others close to you.

What you need to do for 14 days

Because you are at risk of developing SFTS, you should take the following actions for the 14 days from when you were last exposed to SFTS virus:

- self-isolate in private accommodation (unless an alternative arrangement has been agreed with UKHSA). See the information below for information on how to self-isolate
- 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 any other symptoms of SFTS (as listed above)
- report these temperatures to your designated contact (see below for contact details) by 12 noon each day. They will want to know whether your temperature is below, equal to, or above 37.5°C, and will arrange further evaluation as necessary. They will explain the local arrangements for accessing healthcare
- if you become ill with any of the symptoms listed above in between reporting to your designated contact, you should phone your designated contact immediately. See below for further information on what you should do if you become ill

How to self-isolate

You should self-isolate for 14 days from when you were last exposed to SFTS virus. This means you should stay at home (or at an alternative arrangement agreed with UKHSA) and away from other people, that is:

- do not go to work, school or public areas
- do not travel, either within the UK or internationally
- do not have visitors to your home

If it is possible to self-isolate at home, you should self-isolate in a separate room from other members of your household, and avoid all contact with them, including sexual contact. You should:

- sleep in a separate room to other people
- use separate bathroom facilities for going to the toilet and for washing
- only leave your home if it is essential, for example in an emergency, for an urgent medical appointment, or for urgent health and wellbeing issues
- use separate items for eating and drinking, such as cutlery, cups, or plates, to other people in your household

- use your own personal items – do not share items such as bedding, towels, wash cloths, toothbrushes or razors

If you need help with groceries or other essentials:

- ask friends or family to drop your shopping off, or order online
- ask your friends, family or delivery drivers to leave your shopping at your front door to avoid contact with them

Postpone any non-essential medical or dental treatment. You should discuss any essential treatment required with your designated contact before attending a healthcare facility.

If there are children in the household

If you have children in your household, you should take precautions to minimise direct contact with them as far as possible, while ensuring that their care and wellbeing needs are met.

If a child in your household is a close contact of someone with SFTS, they should receive the care and contact they need to support their wellbeing.

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

If you are feeling unwell or develop any of the symptoms of SFTS (including a temperature of 37.5°C or higher) within the 14 days from when you were last exposed to an individual with SFTS, please **remain at home**. Take your temperature if you have not done this already 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 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-guidance)

Document information

Version 1.0. October 2026