

**Cholera outbreak alert notice in Dadaab, Kenya:**

January 6, 2016

Dear State Refugee Health Coordinator:

We are writing to notify you of a cholera outbreak in Dadaab, Kenya, and to inform you of measures CDC and partners have taken to reduce the risk of cholera among U.S.-bound refugees. Kenya has been experiencing a widespread cholera outbreak since December, 2014. The first cholera case in Dadaab was detected on November 18, 2015. As of January 2, 2016, a total of 1140 cases and 10 deaths from cholera have been reported in Dadaab. UNHCR, the Kenya Ministry of Health, and in-country partners have implemented extensive public health measures to control the outbreak, including improvements in water and sanitation, case management, and community outreach/education. To date, no cases of cholera have occurred among U.S.-bound refugees.

CDC is notifying its domestic partners to raise awareness of the potential cholera exposure of refugees from Dadaab, so partners can respond quickly in the event of any refugees developing symptoms after arrival in the U.S. However, CDC and its partners have implemented the following measures to reduce the risk of cholera among U.S.-bound refugees from Dadaab:

1. Refugees departing Dadaab for resettlement to the U.S. will be moved to a transit center in Nairobi, Kenya, for a 5-day surveillance period prior to departure. During this surveillance period, IOM medical staff monitor the health of refugees in the transit center on a daily basis, and have established procedures for referring any refugees who develop diarrhea or other signs of illness for immediate medical evaluation and treatment.
2. Hygiene measures and cholera prevention messages are being reinforced at the transit center.

With the above measures in place, the risk of cholera transmission among U.S.-bound refugees from Dadaab is low. Refugees resettling to the US from Dadaab will be arriving in 15 different U.S. states.

Cholera is an acute diarrheal illness spread by ingestion of contaminated food and water, so meticulous hand hygiene after toileting and before handling food or beverages is a cornerstone of prevention along with safe sanitation practices. Cholera is transmitted through ingestion of food or beverages that have been handled by a person who is shedding *V. cholera*, or through ingestion of water contaminated with sewage that contains *V. cholerae* bacteria. The *V. cholerae* strain currently circulating in Dadaab is susceptible to tetracycline and ciprofloxacin, with resistance to erythromycin in some cases. Additional information on cholera is available at <http://www.cdc.gov/cholera/index.html> and through your local health department.

CDC, in partnership with in-country and international partners, will continue to monitor the situation in Dadaab, Kenya, and will follow up with additional information and recommendations as they become available. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Emily Jentes, PhD, MPH
CDR, USPHS
Division of Global Migration and Quarantine
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
404-639-4385 (Phone)
404-639-4441 (Fax)
ejentes@cdc.gov