Today’s world is more connected than ever. In as little as 36 hours, a pathogen from a remote village can spread to all major cities in six continents. That is why it is critical to detect, report and respond to outbreaks in a timely manner.

A Disease Threat Anywhere is a Threat Everywhere.

1. Incident Occurs

A new or existing pathogen is introduced to a community and starts to spread. Humans or animals start to feel ill or even die with similar symptoms.

2. Outbreak Suspected

An outbreak is suspected. There are several ways to detect and verify a disease through reported cases or from event information.

3. Investigation Started

Local clinics and hospitals see more people with symptoms such as fever, persistent diarrhea, cough and unexplained bleeding.

4. Reporting

Authorities report disease outbreak to appropriate national and international organizations in accordance with the International Health Regulations.

5. Global Response Initiated

CDC’s global rapid responders are deployed when a country requests additional support to:

- Implement infection prevention and control measures and distribute medical countermeasures
- Conduct public health communication and education
- Enhance local surveillance systems to track outbreaks
- Improve local lab testing for faster diagnosis

CDC is at the forefront of disease detection and response, working 24/7 to protect the health, safety, and security of American people. CDC’s work ensures that outbreaks are contained before they can spread and reach the U.S.

www.cdc.gov/globalhealth


This is a snapshot of an outbreak investigation and does not reflect all the steps that may occur. Information presented in this example depicts a prompt outbreak identification. Several factors affect the investigation and can prolong the timing and results. Delays in response activities can lead to outbreaks spreading quickly and spillover to other communities.