Ebola in New York City should Americans be worried?

By ACSH Staff — October 24, 2014

Ebola has come to New York City and Americans continue to worry about the possibility of an Ebola epidemic in the United States, apparently even going so far as to buy [sham Ebola cures online](https://www.acsh.org/news/2014/10/24/ebola-new-york-city-americans-worried). However, two *New York Times* articles argue that the possibility of an Ebola epidemic in the US is still highly unlikely.

In his column [2] How to Defeat Ebola, The New York Times Nicholas Kristof points out that many Ebola-prevention ideas, such as banning flights from West African countries or refusing to let students from Rwanda (which is almost 3,000 miles away from countries with Ebola cases) attend a New Jersey school, are useless and mixed-up notions of how to protect ourselves. Kristof suggests that we need to stop worrying about our own country, which has advanced health systems and an almost non-existent risk of experiencing an epidemic, and instead focus our efforts on Ebola where it counts most: West Africa.

In another *New York Times* article [3], As Ebola Spreads, So Have Several Fallacies, Carl Zimmer reminds readers that several misconceptions about Ebola continue to spread, including the belief that the Ebola virus is airborne, as in the case of influenza. The truth is, a person can only be infected with Ebola by coming in contact with the bodily fluids of an infected person usually blood, vomit, or diarrhea. A person cannot become infected simply by standing near someone with the virus, and probably not by touching a [bowling ball](https://www.acsh.org/news/2014/10/24/ebola-new-york-city-americans-worried) either. The flu, however, is extremely contagious and should be of much greater concern to Americans. However, unlike Ebola which currently has no approved cure or vaccine, a [flu vaccine](https://www.acsh.org/news/2014/10/24/ebola-new-york-city-americans-worried) is available (and widely recommended by medical professionals).

ACSH has pointed out [several myths about Ebola](https://www.acsh.org/news/2014/10/24/ebola-new-york-city-americans-worried) in our recent Dispatch items, some with a humorous point-of-view designed to draw attention away from such nonsense and towards sound science, as always.