FACT SHEET: EBOLA

May 2025

WHAT IS EBOLA?

Ebola, previously known as Ebola hemorrhagic fever, is a rare and deadly disease caused by infection with one of four identified Ebola virus species: Ebola virus, Sudan virus, Taï Forest virus, or Bundibugyo virus. These viruses can cause disease in humans and nonhuman primates (such as monkeys).

WHO CAN GET EBOLA?

Anyone can get Ebola. However, health care workers providing care for Ebola patients and family and friends in close contact with infected persons are at highest risk for becoming infected.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF EBOLA?

Symptoms of Ebola include fever, severe headache, diarrhea, weakness, fatigue, vomiting, unexplained bleeding or bruising, and abdominal pain.

HOW SOON DO SYMPTOMS APPEAR?

Symptoms generally begin anywhere from 2–21 days after exposure, but the average is 8–10 days.

HOW IS EBOLA SPREAD?

People can contract Ebola disease through contact with the blood, fluids, or raw meat of wild animals such as bats, forest antelopes, and primates. Once a person is infected, the virus is transmitted between people through direct contact (through broken skin or mucous membranes in the eyes, nose, or mouth) with the body fluids (blood, urine, saliva, sweat, feces, vomit, breast milk, amniotic fluid, or semen) of an infected person or someone who recently died from Ebola disease. Transmission may also occur through direct contact with materials or surfaces contaminated with these body fluids. Ebola is not spread through the air. A person infected with Ebola can only spread the virus to others once symptoms begin.

HOW IS EBOLA TREATED AND IS THERE A VACCINE?

Currently, there is no specific treatment or vaccine for Ebola. Experimental treatments and vaccines are currently under development and trial. Care for sick patients is supportive and based on a patient's clinical condition.

HOW CAN PEOPLE PROTECT THEMSELVES AGAINST EBOLA?

People who travel to or are in an area affected by an Ebola outbreak should:

- Wash hands frequently with soap and water, scrubbing for at least 20 seconds.
- Avoid contact with sick people, the body of someone who has died from Ebola, and items that may have come into contact with an infected person's body fluids (such as clothes and bedding).
- Avoid contact with the blood, fluids, and raw meat of bats and nonhuman primates.
- Avoid treatment facilities for Ebola patients.
- Self-monitor for symptoms of Ebola for 21 days after travel and seek medical care immediately if symptoms develop.

Healthcare workers who may be exposed to patients with Ebola should wear appropriate personal protective equipment and practice proper infection control measures.

WANT MORE INFORMATION?

Information about Ebola and other related health topics can be found at cdc.gov. Before traveling, visit CDC's Travelers' Health website for any active Travel Health Notices related to Ebola. The DC Department of Health promotes the health and safety of the District residents. For additional information, please visit dchealth.dc.gov or call (202) 442-5865.

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