



Ebola

What is Ebola?

Ebola is a rare and often deadly virus that has caused sporadic outbreaks of disease in Africa, including the current 2014 Ebola epidemic affecting multiple countries in West Africa. Researchers believe that the first patient becomes infected through contact with an infected animal native to Africa. Although the risk of Ebola spreading in the United States is very low, CDC and its partners are taking actions to prevent this from happening.

How is Ebola spread?

Ebola is spread through **direct contact** (through broken skin or mucous membranes) with

- Blood and body fluids (like urine, feces, saliva, vomit, sweat, and semen) of a person who is sick with Ebola.
- Objects (like needles) that have been contaminated with the blood or body fluids of a person sick with Ebola.

Ebola is **not** spread through the air, water, or food.

What are the symptoms of Ebola?

The time from exposure to when signs or symptoms of the disease appear (the incubation period) is 2 to 21 days, but the average time is 8 to 10 days. A person infected with Ebola is **not contagious** until symptoms appear.

Because the early symptoms of Ebola are often similar to other commonly occurring illnesses, assessment of recent travel or contact to a person sick with Ebola is essential.

Symptoms of Ebola include:

- Fever (100.4°F or 38°C or greater)
- Severe headache
- Muscle pain
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Stomach pain
- Unexplained bleeding or bruising

Recovery from Ebola depends on the patient's immune response.

How is Ebola Treated?

There is no FDA-approved vaccine available for Ebola. Experimental vaccines and treatments for Ebola are under development, but they have not yet been fully tested for safety or effectiveness. Supportive therapy for symptoms is provided while the patient is kept in strict isolation until they have recovered.

Protect Yourself against Ebola?

DO wash your hands often with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

Do **NOT** touch the blood or body fluids (like urine, feces, saliva, vomit, sweat, and semen) of people who are sick.

Do **NOT** handle items that may have come in contact with a sick person's blood or body fluids, like clothes, bedding, needles, or medical equipment.

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