



Ebola

What is Ebola?

Ebola (Ebola virus disease or EVD) is a severe, often fatal, illness that can infect humans.

How is Ebola spread?

Ebola is spread to people when they **touch** a sick person's body fluids (blood, breast milk, urine, saliva, vomit, sweat, semen, urine, or stool).

Objects and surfaces that are wet with infected body fluids may spread Ebola, including but not limited to clothing and bed sheets.

Ebola is not spread through the air or through water. Ebola is also not usually spread through eating food, but may be spread through handling or eating infected animals (bushmeat) from areas with an Ebola outbreak.

Ebola can spread between family and friends if they come in contact with the body fluids of an ill person. Ebola may spread during funerals or burial rituals if people have close contact with the body of a person who died of Ebola.

Ebola can also spread in health care settings (such as a clinic or hospital) if the hospital staff does not wear the correct protective equipment, such as masks, gowns, and gloves.

Someone with Ebola can **only** spread the illness to others after they begin feeling sick, not before.

What are the symptoms of Ebola?

Symptoms usually include fever, severe headache, weakness, joint and muscle pain, nausea, diarrhea, and vomiting. Some people may also have a rash, red eyes, cough, sore throat, or bleeding inside and outside of the body. Symptoms can begin 2 to 21 days after being exposed to infected body fluids, but usually begin in 8 to 10 days.

How is Ebola diagnosed?

The symptoms of Ebola are similar to other infections that are more common in West Africa, such as malaria. People with flu-like symptoms in Boston may be sick with a number of different diseases. Call your health care provider to see if you should come in to be checked. Health care providers can use laboratory tests to find out if someone is sick with Ebola or something different.

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How is Ebola treated?

There is no FDA approved treatment or vaccine available for Ebola at this time. Supportive care, such as rest, fluids, and medicine to reduce a fever, is given to people who are ill. New vaccines are being evaluated.

How can Ebola be prevented?

It is important to avoid contact with blood and other body fluids of any ill person. Objects and surfaces contaminated with body fluids can be cleaned with a bleach solution or other approved, household cleaner.

Health care providers take special measures to prevent the spread of Ebola if they think someone is sick, including:

- Wearing protective clothing (such as masks, gloves, gowns, and goggles)
- Using infection control measures (such as cleaning surfaces and equipment)
- Isolating people who may be sick with Ebola to keep others from getting sick

Dead bodies of Ebola victims can still spread Ebola to others. In areas with an Ebola outbreak, avoid touching dead bodies or fluids from dead bodies. Contact local health officials (such as a Ministry of Health) for assistance.

Good hand washing can also help prevent the spread of Ebola and other germs.

For help finding a health care provider in Boston, please call the Mayor's Health Line at 617-534-5050.

For updates on the Ebola outbreak in West Africa, including information for people interested in traveling to this area, visit www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola

