

Facts about Ebola Virus

...Information from the CDC

Wendy Walker, MD

“Ebola, previously known as Ebola hemorrhagic fever, is a rare and deadly disease caused by infection with one of the Ebola virus strains. Ebola can cause disease in humans and nonhuman primates (monkeys, gorillas, and chimpanzees).

Symptoms of Ebola include

- Fever
- Severe headache
- Muscle pain
- Weakness
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Abdominal (stomach) pain
- Unexplained hemorrhage (bleeding or bruising)

Symptoms may appear anywhere from 2 to 21 days after exposure to Ebola, but the average is 8 to 10 days.

Recovery from Ebola depends on good supportive clinical care and the patient’s immune response. People who recover from Ebola infection develop antibodies that last for at least 10 years.

Ebola viruses are found in several African countries. Ebola was first discovered in 1976 near the Ebola River in what is now the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Since then, outbreaks of Ebola among humans have appeared sporadically in Africa.

Risk

All cases of human illness or death from Ebola have occurred in Africa (with the exception of several laboratory contamination cases: one in England and two in Russia). One travel-associated case was diagnosed in the United States on September 30, 2014. On October 12, 2014, a healthcare worker at Texas Presbyterian Hospital who provided care for the index patient has tested positive for Ebola. CDC confirms that the healthcare worker is positive for Ebola.

Healthcare providers caring for Ebola patients and the family and friends in close contact with Ebola patients are at the highest risk of getting sick because they may come in contact with the blood or body fluids of sick patients. People also can become sick with Ebola after coming in contact with infected wildlife. For example, in Africa, Ebola may spread as a result of handling bushmeat (wild animals hunted for food) and contact with infected bats. The virus also can be spread through

contact with objects (like clothes, bedding, needles, syringes/sharps or medical equipment) that have been contaminated with the virus or with infected animals.

How do I protect myself against Ebola?

If you must travel to an area affected by the 2014 Ebola outbreak, protect yourself by doing the following:

- Wash hands frequently or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid contact with blood and body fluids of any person, particularly someone who is sick.
- Do not handle items that may have come in contact with an infected person's blood or body fluids.
- Do not touch the body of someone who has died from Ebola.
- Do not touch bats and nonhuman primates or their blood and fluids and do not touch or eat raw meat prepared from these animals.
- Avoid hospitals in West Africa where Ebola patients are being treated. The U.S. Embassy or consulate is often able to provide advice on medical facilities.
- Seek medical care immediately if you develop fever (temperature of 100.4°F/38.0°C or higher) and any of the other following symptoms: headache, muscle pain, diarrhea, vomiting, stomach pain, or unexplained bruising or bleeding.
 - Limit your contact with other people until and when you go to the doctor. Do not travel anywhere else besides a healthcare facility.

CDC has issued a Warning, Level 3 travel notice for U.S. citizens to avoid nonessential travel to Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. CDC has downgraded the travel notice for Nigeria to a Watch, Level 1 because of the decreased risk of Ebola in Nigeria. Travelers to Nigeria should practice usual precautions. CDC has also issued an Alert, Level 2 travel notice for the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). A small number of Ebola cases have been reported in the DRC, though current information indicates that this outbreak is not related to the ongoing Ebola outbreak in West Africa. For travel notices and other information for travelers, visit the [Travelers' Health Ebola web page](#) at CDC.gov. “