

FACT SHEET: EBOLA



What is Ebola?

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). Ebola was first discovered in 1976 near the Ebola River in what is now the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Since then, outbreaks have appeared sporadically in Africa. The 2014 Ebola epidemic is the largest in history, affecting multiple countries in West Africa.

One travel-associated case was diagnosed in the United States on September 30, 2014. On October 10 and October 14, 2014, two healthcare workers at Texas Presbyterian Hospital who provided care for the index patient tested positive for Ebola. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and its partners are taking many precautions to prevent the spread of Ebola within the United States; the risk of an outbreak is very low. CDC has also deployed teams of public health experts to West Africa and will continue to send experts to the affected countries.

How is Ebola spread?

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

- Blood or body fluids (including but not limited to urine, saliva, feces, vomit, and semen) of a person sick with Ebola
- Objects (like needles and syringes) that have been contaminated with the virus
- Infected animals

A person must be sick and have symptoms to transmit Ebola. Ebola is not spread through the air, water, or food.

What are the symptoms of Ebola?

After exposure to Ebola, symptoms may appear anywhere from 2 to 21 days later; the average is 8 to 10 days. Symptoms of Ebola may include:

- Fever (greater than 101.5°F)
- Severe headache
- Muscle pain
- Weakness
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Abdominal (stomach) pain
- Unexplained hemorrhage (bleeding or bruising)

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How is Ebola treated?

There is no specific vaccine or medicine (e.g., antiviral drug) that has been FDA-approved to treat Ebola. Symptoms of Ebola are treated as they appear. The following basic interventions, when used early, can significantly improve the chances of survival:

- Providing intravenous fluids (IV) and balancing electrolytes (body salts).
- Maintaining oxygen status and blood pressure.
- Treating other infections, if they occur.

Some experimental treatments for Ebola are in development. The chances of surviving an Ebola infection are roughly 50:50. People who do recover from an Ebola infection develop protective antibodies that last for at least 10 years, possibly longer.

How do I protect myself against Ebola?

The typical working environment does not involve the close, personal contact needed to transmit the virus. Therefore, Ebola is essentially impossible to spread in a normal workplace.

Travel to West Africa should be avoided if at all possible. Air travel itself is not considered to be a risk in terms of transmitting the Ebola virus. However, if an employee enters a geographic area affected by an Ebola outbreak, he or she should do the following:

- Practice careful hygiene, including frequent hand washing.
- Avoid contact with blood and body fluids.
- Do not handle items that may have come in contact with an infected person's blood or body fluids.
- Avoid funeral or burial rituals that require handling the body of someone who has died from Ebola.
- Avoid contact with bats and nonhuman primates or blood, fluids, and raw meat prepared from these animals.
- Avoid hospitals where Ebola patients are being treated. The U.S. Embassy or Consulate is often able to provide advice on facilities.
- After returning to the United States, the employee should monitor his or her health for 21 days and seek medical care immediately if any symptoms of Ebola develop.

AllOne Health is staying informed on every aspect of the Ebola outbreak. For the latest news and updates, including articles on the contagiousness of Ebola and the outbreak's impact on travel, go to www.allonehealth.com/news-media.aspx.

For additional information on Ebola, visit [The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](http://www.cdc.gov) site, which is updated frequently with current developments.