



Indiana State Department of Health

Epidemiology Resource Center

Quick Facts

About...Ebola Virus Disease

What is Ebola Virus Disease (EVD)?

Ebola virus disease (also known as Ebola hemorrhagic fever) is a very serious, often deadly disease in humans and in infected animals such as monkeys, gorillas, and chimpanzees. A very large outbreak of EVD began in March, 2014 and is continuing. The only affected West African countries in the current outbreak are Guinea, Liberia, Mali, and Sierra Leone.

What are the symptoms of EVD?

Symptoms may appear anywhere from two to 21 days following exposure, but often appear between eight and 10 days following exposure.

Common symptoms include:

- Fever
- Headache
- Joint and muscle pain
- Weakness
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Stomach pain
- Lack of appetite

Some patients may experience:

- Rash
- Red eyes
- Hiccups
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Chest pain
- Difficulty breathing
- Difficulty swallowing
- Bleeding inside/outside the body

People are contagious as long as their blood and bodily fluids contain the virus. People who do not have symptoms are not contagious.

How is EVD spread?

It is not known how EVD is first spread to humans, but it is thought to be spread through close contact with the blood, secretions or other body fluids of an infected animal. Once the virus has been spread to humans, it is spread from person to

person by contact with the blood or body fluids (e.g. saliva, vomit, stool, urine, sweat, semen, and breast milk) of an infected person; by contact with an object that is contaminated with the infected body fluids (e.g., used needles); or by contact with a deceased EVD patient.

Who is at risk for EVD?

During Ebola outbreaks, people at the highest risk of getting the disease are healthcare workers (especially those caring for EVD patients or handling remains of a deceased EVD patient), and family and friends who are in close contact with and/or caring for an infected person. Healthcare workers and friends and family members of EVD patients should wear protective equipment (e.g., masks, gowns, and gloves) when caring for infected patients. Confirmed cases of EVD in the 2014 outbreak have been reported in Guinea, Liberia, Mali, and Sierra Leone. The outbreaks in Senegal and Nigeria were declared over on October 17 and October 19, respectively. Four confirmed cases of EVD (including one case death) have been reported in the United States. In general, the risk of getting EVD is very low. People participating in animal research, travelers to areas where EVD outbreaks are occurring, healthcare workers in affected areas, and people who have contact with deceased EVD patients have a higher high risk getting the disease.

How do I know if I have EVD?

If you notice any signs or symptoms of EVD following travel to an affected area, STAY HOME from work, school, and public gatherings and immediately CALL your healthcare provider. Do NOT visit the provider's office or hospital before calling. Be prepared to describe when your symptoms started, the dates you traveled, and activities while you were traveling. When travelling to a healthcare provider, limit your contact with others. Any other travel should be avoided.

Diagnosis of the disease is made through laboratory testing. Your healthcare provider can arrange for testing.

How is EVD treated?

No antiviral medication is available to treat EVD. Treatment is limited to relieving symptoms. This may include:

- replacing fluids and electrolytes
- maintaining oxygen and blood pressure levels
- treating for other infections that may also be present

How is EVD prevented?

At this time there is no vaccine to prevent EVD. Understanding the nature of the disease and how it is spread are important ways to prevent it from spreading further.

Several steps can be taken to prevent people from getting EVD:

- When travelling to affected areas, follow the CDC guidance for travel precautions found at <http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/travelers/index.html>
 - Avoid visiting areas with outbreaks of EVD
 - Avoid facilities in West Africa where Ebola patients are being treated
 - Avoid contact with animals (e.g., rodents and bats) in affected countries
 - Use insecticide-treated bed nets and wear insect repellent
 - Avoid eating primates, bats, and other bushmeat in affected countries
- Listen to and follow the directions given by healthcare providers and public health officials.
- When visiting patients in the hospital or caring for someone at home, frequent hand washing with soap and water is recommended after touching a patient, being in contact with their bodily fluids, or touching his/her surroundings.
- If you suspect someone close to you or in your community of having Ebola virus disease, encourage and support them in seeking appropriate medical treatment in a care facility.

All information presented is intended for public use. For more information, please refer to: <http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/index.html>

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