

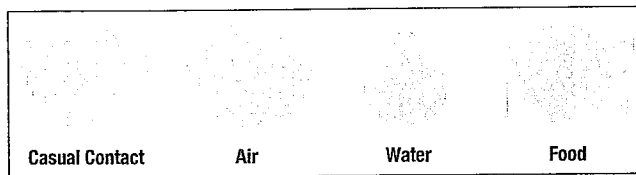
What Do I Need to Know about Ebola?

Is the Ebola Virus Highly Contagious?

Although Ebola is caused by a virus, it does not spread easily like the flu. You *cannot* get Ebola through:

- casual contact
- water
- air
- food

Safe:



Ebola virus is easily killed with soap, bleach, sunlight, and high temperatures. Ebola virus survives only a short time on surfaces that are dry or exposed to the sun.

How Does Ebola Spread?

Ebola spreads only when people are sick. A person must have symptoms to spread the disease to others. For example, if a person has been exposed to Ebola but has no symptoms, you will not get sick if you shake their hand. But if someone with Ebola had a high fever, you could get sick, too, if their hands were sweaty, you shook hands, and then rubbed your eyes, nose, or mouth—or if you had an open cut on your hand.

Ebola spreads through:

- body fluids (such as blood, vomit, urine, feces, sweat, semen, and spit) of a person who is sick with or has died from Ebola
- objects contaminated with the virus (such as needles, medical equipment)
- the blood, fluids, or meat of infected animals

In order to be infected, you must first touch the contaminated item and then touch yourself in the mouth, nose, eyes, anus, sex organs, or open wound.

What Are the Symptoms of Illness with Ebola?

Symptoms can appear from 2 to 21 days after exposure. The average number of days between exposure to Ebola and onset of illness is 8 to 10 days.

Symptoms:

- fever
- headache
- diarrhea
- vomiting
- stomach pain
- unexplained bleeding or bruising
- muscle pain

After 21 days, if an exposed person does not develop symptoms, he or she will not become sick with Ebola.

Who Is at Greatest Risk for Getting Ebola?

Health care providers caring for Ebola patients are at the highest risk of getting sick, because they may come in contact with infected blood or the body fluids of sick patients. Family and friends who come in close contact with the body fluids of Ebola patients are also at risk.

How Is Ebola Treated?

Treatment for Ebola largely consists of supportive care and keeping the patient as comfortable as possible. When provided early, basic interventions greatly improve the chances of survival. These interventions are:

- providing intravenous fluids (IV) and balancing electrolytes (body salts)
- maintaining oxygen status and blood pressure
- treating other infections if they occur

Recovery from Ebola depends on good, supportive clinical care and the patient's immune response. Once someone recovers from Ebola, he or she can no longer spread the virus. People who recover from Ebola infection develop antibodies that last for at least 10 years.

Sources

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