

Frequently Asked Questions

What is Ebola?

Ebola is a severe, often fatal disease that can occur in humans and some animals. It is caused by an infection with a virus.

How is Ebola spread?

Ebola is spread through direct contact with the blood or body fluids of an infected, symptomatic person. It is also spread through exposure to objects (such as needles) that have been contaminated with infected secretions. Ebola is not transmitted through the air, food or water. It can also spread when people have direct contact with dead bodies of people who died from Ebola or with infected bats, rodents, or primates.

How do people get Ebola?

The manner in which the virus first appears in a human at the start of an outbreak is unknown. However, researchers believe that the first patient becomes infected through contact with an infected animal. Ebola spreads from person to person, but you can only get Ebola through unprotected, direct contact with the blood or body fluids of an infected symptomatic person, or a person who has died from, Ebola. You can also get Ebola from unprotected direct contact with objects that have come in contact with the body fluids of someone sick with Ebola such as needles. During outbreaks of Ebola, those at highest risk include health care workers and the family and friends of infected person.

What are the symptoms of Ebola?

Symptoms of Ebola include:

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

Some people may also have:

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

Symptoms can appear anywhere from 2 to 21 days after exposure to the virus though 8-10 days is most common. If symptoms start later than 21 days after exposure, the patient likely does not have Ebola.

Can I get Ebola from a person who is infected but doesn't have symptoms?

No. People who do not have symptoms are not contagious.

How is Ebola diagnosed?

If a person has the early symptoms of Ebola and there is reason to believe that Ebola should be considered, the patient should be isolated at a hospital, and public health professionals should be notified. The NJ Department of Health will work with your doctors to determine whether testing for Ebola is needed.

What is the treatment for people with Ebola?

There is no specific medicine that cures individuals infected with Ebola. People with Ebola will receive medical care such as fluids, oxygen, blood transfusions, and any other medicines as needed. Early treatment is best.

Where can I get more information on Ebola?

- NJ Department of Health <https://nj.gov/health/cd/topics/vhf.shtml>
- Centers for Disease Control & Prevention <https://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/index.html>

This information is intended for educational purposes only and is not intended to replace consultation with a health care professional.
Adapted from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

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