



What to Know About Ebola

What is Ebola?

Ebola is a severe viral infection that can cause organ failure and death in humans. Outbreaks have occurred in parts of Central and West Africa. The current outbreak of Ebola is centered in the West African countries of Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone.

How does Ebola spread?

- Ebola *does not* spread through the air or by water.
- Ebola is spread through direct contact with blood or body fluids (such as urine, saliva, feces, vomit, sweat, breast milk and semen) of a person who is sick with Ebola. Direct contact means having infected blood or body fluid come into contact with broken skin or the eyes, nose, or mouth.
- Ebola can also be spread through direct contact with needles and other items that have been contaminated with blood or body fluid of a person who is sick with Ebola.
- In Africa, Ebola may be spread as a result of handling wild animals hunted for food and from contact with infected bats.

Who is at risk for getting Ebola?

- Family and friends in close contact with Ebola patients and healthcare workers caring for Ebola patients are at highest risk for getting sick because they may come in contact with infected blood or body fluids.
- Travelers visiting or returning from areas in Africa where an Ebola outbreak has occurred are at risk if they had direct contact with a person who is sick with Ebola.
- At this time, there is very little risk for the general U.S. population.

What are the symptoms of Ebola?

Symptoms begin with fever and muscle pain. These are followed by more severe symptoms, including:

- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Severe headache
- Stomach pain
- Unexplained 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 the patient's immune response and getting supportive care to treat symptoms when the illness first begins.



What should a person do if they think they have Ebola?

People who may have been exposed to Ebola and do not feel well should immediately go to the hospital. They should tell medical staff right away that they think they have been exposed to Ebola. Travelers returning from Africa where Ebola outbreaks have occurred should self-monitor their health for 21 days and seek medical care immediately if symptoms of Ebola develop.

Now that there is a confirmed case in the U.S., is there a danger of it spreading in the U.S.?

The risk of an outbreak in the U.S. is very low. Public health agencies and medical providers are prepared to stop the spread of Ebola. Steps are in place for early identification and isolation of Ebola patients, and for finding contacts of Ebola patients and monitoring them for the development of symptoms.

Can hospitals in the U.S. care for an Ebola patient?

Any U.S. hospital that is following the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) infection control recommendations can safely manage a patient with Ebola.

Is there Ebola in Colorado?

No. There are no known persons with Ebola in Colorado at this time.

What is Tri-County Health Department doing to help hospitals prepare for Ebola?

Early recognition is critical to controlling the spread of Ebola. Sophisticated health care systems like those in the U.S. can successfully contain the disease using recommended isolation and infection control procedures. Tri-County Health Department is following CDC guidance to prepare for the possibility of Ebola, and has notified hospitals and health care providers to watch for and evaluate any patient with symptoms consistent with Ebola.

Where do I get more information on Ebola?

Visit the CDC website at www.cdc.gov.

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Sources: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)