

## **Ebola Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What is Ebola?**

Ebola virus disease is a severe, often fatal disease that affects humans and some animals (like monkeys, gorillas, and chimpanzees). It is caused by the Ebola virus.

Currently, there is an Ebola outbreak in West Africa. The first-ever U.S. case of Ebola was diagnosed in late September, when a patient who had traveled from West Africa to Texas became sick.

### **How does Ebola spread?**

Ebola is spread by directly touching an infected person's skin, blood or body fluids. It is not spread through the air or simply by being near someone who is infected. People only become contagious *after* they begin to have symptoms, such as fever.

Since the virus can survive on surfaces for a short time, people can be infected by touching objects (like needles or bed sheets) that contain infected blood or body fluids.

During outbreaks, the disease can spread within health care settings if workers do not wear protective gear and take proper precautions.

### **What is happening with the current outbreak?**

The current outbreak is largely taking place in three West African countries: Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

On September 30, 2014, the first travel-related U.S. case of Ebola was diagnosed in Dallas, Texas. The patient did not have symptoms when leaving Liberia in West Africa, but started to feel sick days after arriving in Dallas.

Since the situation is evolving, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC's) website for the most up-to-date information on countries affected by Ebola outbreak: <http://www.cdc.gov/ebola>.

### **Now that someone in the U.S. has been diagnosed with Ebola, am I at a higher risk?**

No. The only way to get infected with Ebola is to directly come into contact with an infected person's blood or body fluid. The nation's top health experts are continuing to monitor the outbreak, including the recent situation in Dallas, and are working with health care providers, hospitals and others to make sure that everyone is prepared to handle another case of Ebola if it were to occur in the U.S.

### **Am I at risk if I traveled to West Africa?**

If you traveled to one of the affected West African countries in the past three weeks, you are not at risk unless you had direct contact with a person infected with Ebola.

The CDC issued a travel advisory urging all U.S. residents to avoid non-essential travel to Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia: <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices>.

### **What are the symptoms of Ebola?**

The disease usually starts with an abrupt fever, possibly with headache and joint and muscle aches.

Other symptoms may include:

- Nausea
- Weakness
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Stomach pain
- Lack of appetite

Some patients may also experience:

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

### **When do symptoms first appear?**

Symptoms usually appear eight to 10 days after exposure but may appear anywhere from two to 21 days after exposure.

### **How serious is Ebola?**

The severity of the disease varies, but over 50% of patients with Ebola have died during past outbreaks. Researchers do not fully understand why some people who become sick with Ebola recover while others do not.

### **How is Ebola treated?**

There is no known effective medication for Ebola infection. Treatment focuses on supportive care and may require intensive care unit support. There is no vaccine for Ebola.

### **Can Ebola infection be prevented?**

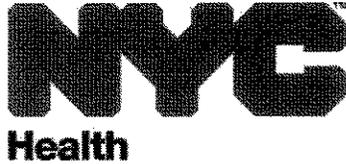
Measures to stop the disease from spreading include

- Quickly identifying people who might be infected with Ebola virus
- Following infection control guidelines in health care facilities (i.e. sterilizing medical equipment and wearing appropriate personal protective equipment )
- Isolating Ebola patients from contact with uninfected people.

**What should I do if I think I have Ebola?**

The only people at risk in the current outbreak are those who might have had direct contact with a person with known or possible Ebola.

*If you visited one of the affected countries and develop fever within three weeks after leaving that country, seek medical care right away. Make sure to tell your doctor if you had direct contact with a person who might have had Ebola. Be sure to alert the doctor's office or emergency room about your symptoms before going so that arrangements can be made, if needed, to prevent others from becoming sick. For more information, call 311.*



## Reducing your risk of Ebola

Ebola is a severe, often fatal disease that affects humans and some animals (like monkeys, gorillas and chimpanzees). It is caused by the Ebola virus. A large outbreak of Ebola is now occurring in Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Lagos, Nigeria.

Ebola is spread by directly touching an infected person or animal's skin, blood or body fluids. You **cannot** get Ebola through the air or water, or by touching someone who is not sick.

Reduce your risk by following the below steps.

### **DO NOT:**

- Touch people who may be sick from Ebola
- Touch patients in hospitals where there have been cases of Ebola
- Touch any body fluids (blood, vomit, urine, feces) of people who are sick
- Touch people who may have died from Ebola, especially when washing and preparing a body for burial
- Touch bats, monkeys, chimpanzees or other animals in the affected countries
- Eat bush meat in the affected countries

### **ALWAYS:**

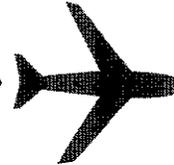
- Wash your hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Wear waterproof gloves and a mask if you are in contact with people who are sick or if you clean a spill that includes body fluids. Be sure to clean your hands with soap and water afterwards.

You may hear rumors that Ebola can be prevented in other ways, such as by drinking or bathing in salt water or using disinfectants or detergents. **These rumors are false and dangerous.** The best way to reduce your risk of getting Ebola is by avoiding direct contact with people or animals sick with Ebola.

**If you have loved ones in the affected areas, help protect them by sharing this information with them.**

*If you visited one of the affected countries, check your temperature daily for 21 days after leaving that country. If you develop fever within those 21 days, seek medical care right away. Tell your doctor about your recent travel, and be sure to notify the doctor's office or emergency room about your symptoms before going so that arrangements can be made, if needed, to prevent others from becoming sick. For more information, call 347-396-7989.*

# EBOLA: AM I AT RISK?



Ebola is a severe, often **fatal disease** caused by a virus. A large outbreak is **now occurring in West Africa**.



YOU CAN ONLY GET EBOLA FROM HAVING DIRECT CONTACT WITH ANOTHER SICK PERSON BY:

- ⊕ Touching a person who is sick with Ebola.
- ⊕ Touching a person who died from Ebola.
- ⊕ Touching body fluids (blood, vomit, urine, feces, sweat) or objects soiled with the body fluids of a person sick with Ebola.

You **CANNOT** get Ebola through the air or just by being near someone who has Ebola.



IF YOU VISITED A COUNTRY AFFECTED BY THE OUTBREAK, AND DEVELOP A FEVER WITHIN 21 DAYS, SEEK MEDICAL CARE RIGHT AWAY.

- ⊕ Alert the doctor's office or emergency room about your symptoms before going.
- ⊕ Tell your doctor if you had direct contact with a person who might have had Ebola.



**SYMPTOMS:** FEVER, HEADACHE, WEAKNESS, VOMITING, DIARRHEA, STOMACH PAIN

Hospital staff **WILL NOT** ask you about immigration status. You **WILL BE SEEN** regardless of ability to pay.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL 311

**NYC**  
Health

# Dealing with Stressful Events

Dealing with disease outbreaks like the Ebola epidemic can be stressful and overwhelming. You may be worried about yourself and your family and feeling frustrated or powerless.

It is normal to feel this way. Try to be patient with yourself and with the people around you. Give yourself time to cope and heal.

## Tips for Managing Stress

- ▶ **Get information from a reliable source.** Try not to act on rumors. Instead, get information from reliable sources, such as [nyc.gov](http://nyc.gov) or 311. Remember that too much media (for example, TV, radio, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram) can upset you and others around you, especially children.
- ▶ **Take care of yourself.** Stress can make you feel tired or cause other physical reactions like headaches, chest pains or breathing problems. It can also make existing medical problems worse. These tips can help you feel calmer:
  - *Try to eat healthy meals, and limit caffeine.*
  - *Sleep six to eight hours a night, if you can.*
  - *If possible, exercise; even a short walk can help you feel calmer.*
  - *Save time for activities that you enjoy.*
  - *Stick to your daily routine. This will help you feel in control of your life.*
- ▶ **Speak up if you are overwhelmed.** If you feel sad, overwhelmed or hopeless, talk about your feelings. You may find that others are feeling the same way and that you can understand and support each other. Try to reach out to friends, family members or a health professional.

If you or someone you know needs help, call LifeNet (800-543-3638), a free 24 hour, seven-days-a-week helpline. Help is available in many languages, and the information you share will be kept private.

Overcoming stressful experiences is difficult, but it *is* possible with time and support. Above all, remember that you are not alone. Help is available.