

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

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The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia®



VACCINE EDUCATION CENTER

Ebola: What You Should Know

Recent reports of a severe Ebola outbreak in Africa, as well as treatment of infected individuals in the United States, have led to many questions and concerns among parents and other community members. While the current situation continues to change and be updated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), this sheet is meant to provide you with some basic information about the virus and its transmission.

Q. What is Ebola?

A. Ebola is a virus that can cause disease in people and in nonhuman primates. A recent large outbreak in Africa has caused concern about its spread throughout the world.

Q. What are the symptoms of Ebola virus infection?

A. People infected with Ebola virus often suffer from fever, headache, muscle pain and weakness, abdominal cramping, diarrhea, vomiting, and unexplained bleeding or bruising. It can take up to 21 days after exposure to develop symptoms.

Q. How is the virus spread?

A. Ebola is not spread as easily as some other infections. The two main ways to catch it are contact with infected wildlife (mostly in wild animals or bats in Africa) or by exposure to blood or body fluids, like saliva, sweat, vomit, breast milk or urine, of infected people. In addition, it is important to understand that only people who are symptomatic can transmit the disease.

Q. Who is at risk?

A. Because the disease is not spread through the air, typically only those in close contact with an infected person, such as caregivers or family members in the home who come in contact with body fluids, are at increased risk.

Q. Is there a vaccine?

A. No. Vaccine trials are being conducted in Africa, where healthcare workers can volunteer for the trials.

Q. How can my family stay healthy?

A. Unless you are traveling to Africa or are in contact with someone who has come from a country in Africa where Ebola virus is spreading, it is currently unlikely that you will be exposed to this virus.

You can stay up to date on cases of Ebola and the CDC's efforts to track any cases in the United States by visiting:
www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/index.html

Information provided by the Vaccine Education Center at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia

vaccine.chop.edu