

Ebola Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

**** Information provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Florida Department of Health**

GENERAL INFORMATION

Q. What is Ebola?

Ebola is a severe, often fatal disease that affects humans and some animals (like dogs, monkeys, gorillas and chimpanzees).

Q. What are the symptoms of Ebola?

A. Ebola symptoms are as follows:

- Fever (greater than 38.6°C or 101.5°F)
- Severe headache
- Muscle pain
- Weakness
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Abdominal (stomach) pain
- Unexplained hemorrhage (bleeding or bruising)

Symptoms may appear anywhere from 2 to 21 days after exposure to Ebola, but the average is 8 to 10 days.

Q. How serious is Ebola?

A. The severity of the disease varies, but more than 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.

Q. How does Ebola spread?

A. People only become contagious *after* they begin to have symptoms, such as fever.

Ebola virus is spread by directly touching an infected person or animal's skin, blood, or body fluids. It cannot be spread simply by being near someone who is infected. Researchers believe that most Ebola outbreaks start when an animal carrying the Ebola virus infects a person, who can then infect other people. Since the virus can survive on surfaces for a short period of 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 quickly within health care settings if workers do not wear protective gear and take proper precautions.

PREVENTION

Q. Is there a vaccine for Ebola?

A. There is no FDA-approved vaccine available for Ebola. Experimental vaccines and treatments for Ebola are under development, but they have not yet been fully tested for safety or effectiveness. Recovery from Ebola depends on good supportive clinical care and the patient's immune response. People who recover from an Ebola infection develop antibodies that last for at least 10 years.

Q. What can I do protect myself from Ebola?

A. Steps you can take to protect yourself from Ebola include:

- DO wash your hands often with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Do NOT touch the blood or body fluids (like urine, feces, saliva, vomit, sweat, and semen) of people who are sick.
- Do NOT handle items that may have come in contact with a sick person's blood or body fluids, like clothes, bedding, needles or medical equipment.
- Do NOT touch the body of someone who has died of Ebola.

Q. What if I am traveling?

A. If you travel to or are in an area affected by an Ebola outbreak, make sure to do the following:

- Practice careful hygiene. For example, wash your hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer and avoid contact with blood and body fluids.
- Do not handle items that may have come in contact with an infected person's blood or body fluids (such as clothes, bedding, needles, and medical equipment).
- Avoid funeral or burial rituals that require handling the body of someone who has died from Ebola.
- Avoid contact with bats and nonhuman primates or blood, fluids, and raw meat prepared from these animals.
- Avoid hospitals in West Africa where Ebola patients are being treated. The U.S. embassy or consulate is often able to provide advice on facilities.
- After you return, monitor your health for 21 days and seek medical care immediately if you develop symptoms of Ebola.

HEALTH FIRST PREPAREDNESS

Q. What is Health First doing to be prepared for Ebola?

A. In coordination with the Brevard County Health Department, Health First has expanded its plans, protocols and training in the event a suspected or confirmed Ebola case arrives at one of our facilities. Our plan includes criteria for early detection, isolation and coordinated care of our patients with all safety precautions. Additional measures we are taking to protect our community include:

- We are conducting extensive training and drills with all of our staff.
- We have protective equipment for our clinical staff.
- We have implemented more rigorous evaluations of all patients who come to our facilities.
- In the event of any suspicious cases, we would immediately enact our comprehensive isolation procedures and emergency management plan.
- If there is any indication of a highly infectious disease, such as Ebola, we would work with the Brevard County Health Department, who then coordinates with the Florida Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to ensure optimal patient care.

GENERAL QUESTIONS

Q. I am vomiting – does that mean I have Ebola?

A. If you are vomiting, you should contact your healthcare provider and seek treatment, but this does not mean you have Ebola. There are specific criteria, which include having traveled to West Africa, which would increase your risk to Ebola.

Q. How will I know if I have the flu or Ebola?

A. Flu season typically runs October through March and many people experience high fever or vomiting when they are ill. However, because Ebola is only spread by directly touching an infected person or animals' skin, blood or bodily fluids, if you have not come into contact with someone with Ebola, then more than likely you are experiencing the flu or a similar-like virus.

Q. Does Ebola spread like the flu?

A. No. Ebola is not spread like a cold or flu. You can only get Ebola from contact with bodily fluids from a person who is sick with or had died from Ebola, or from exposure to contaminated objects such as needles.

Q. I heard in the news that dogs and cats can get Ebola – is this true?

A. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, at this time, there have been no reports of dogs or cats becoming sick with Ebola or of being able to spread Ebola to people or other animals. Even in areas in Africa where Ebola is present, there have been no reports of dogs and cats becoming sick with Ebola. There is limited evidence that dogs become infected with Ebola virus, but there is no evidence that they develop disease.

Q: Where can I get more information?

A. For more information, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at www.cdc.gov.