

# **EBOLA VIRUS DISEASE (EVD)**

## **What is Ebola?**

Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) is one of several hemorrhagic fevers caused by a virus. The virus was discovered in 1976 near the Ebola River in what is now the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Since then, sporadic outbreaks have occurred in several African countries. The current outbreak is affecting Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Guinea, all located in Western Africa.

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

The signs and symptoms of Ebola include sudden onset of fever (greater than 100.4 degrees), severe headache, muscle pain, weakness, vomiting, diarrhea, stomach pain, and unexplained bleeding/bruising.

## **How does someone get infected with Ebola?**

The Ebola virus is spread by coming in direct contact (through broken skin or mucous membranes such as the eyes, nose, or mouth) with

- body fluids (vomit, sweat, blood, breast milk, feces, urine, saliva, and semen) of a person who has Ebola
- objects that have become contaminated with body fluids from a person infected with Ebola (bed linens, clothes, medical supplies and equipment, etc.)
- infected animals (other than humans, only bats, monkeys, and apes)

Ebola is not spread in water, food, or in the air. There is no evidence to suggest that pets can spread Ebola.

## **How do I know if I am at risk of being infected with the Ebola virus?**

Healthcare providers caring for patients infected with Ebola and family members and friends in close contact with persons infected with Ebola are at greatest risk of getting sick because they may come in direct contact with blood, body fluids, or items contaminated with the virus.

## **How can Ebola be prevented?**

Currently, there is no FDA approved vaccine available nor are there medications available to treat Ebola once someone becomes sick. If you are not a healthcare worker, do not handle clothes, bed linens, medical supplies, or other items that have come in contact with a sick person's blood or body fluids. Practice good personal hygiene such as washing your hands with soap and water or using an alcohol based hand-sanitizer. Again, avoid contact with blood, body fluids, and contaminated items.

## **What should I do if I have to travel to one of the countries with wide-spread Ebola transmission?**

If you travel to a country in Africa with wide-spread Ebola transmission (currently, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea), here are some recommendations:

- avoid funeral or burial rites that involve handling the body of someone who has died from Ebola

- do not handle items that have come in contact with an infected person's blood or other body fluids (clothes, bed linens, medical supplies, etc.)
- practice good personal hygiene such as washing your hands with soap and water or using an alcohol based hand-sanitizer
- contact your local public health department upon your return so they can conduct a risk assessment and determine if it is necessary to monitor your health for a period of 21 days.

**Where can I get more information about Ebola?**

Your local public health department is an excellent resource for you to contact. Also, you can call the 24 hour hotline to speak with an expert at 1-800-222-1222. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has information available at its website, [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).