

## What is Ebola?

- Ebola is caused by the Ebola virus. It affects many of the body's organ systems and often causes severe illness.
- Symptoms of Ebola most commonly start 8-10 days after coming into contact with Ebola virus but can occur as early as 2 days to up to 21 days after exposure. Symptoms include:
  - Fever, Headache, Joint and muscle aches, Weakness, Diarrhea, Vomiting, Stomach pain, Lack of appetite, Abnormal bleeding
- Ebola is a serious disease with a high fatality rate. Unfortunately, there are no available medications to cure Ebola, and there is no vaccine or medicine to prevent Ebola.

## How is Ebola spread?

- Ebola is spread by direct contact with blood or other body fluids (such as: vomit, diarrhea, urine, breast milk, sweat, semen) of an infected person who has symptoms of Ebola or who has recently died from Ebola.
- It can also be spread on objects or surfaces contaminated by body fluids of an infected person, for example clothing or bedding of an ill person that have not been cleaned.
- Ebola can only be spread from one person to another when someone has symptoms.
- **Ebola is not spread through food, water, or the air.**
- Ebola is not spread through casual contact.
- The animal host for Ebola is believed to be fruit bats. The disease can then be passed to other animals such as antelope, pigs, monkey, etc. Any infected animal that bites a person or is eaten by a person (without cooking) can transmit the disease to the person.
- In countries where Ebola is occurring, avoid contact with sick or dead wild animals. Do not eat wild animals or bush meat.

## Who can spread Ebola to others?

- For a person to spread Ebola to others, they must have:
  - Been in an area within the last 21 days where Ebola disease is occurring,  
**AND**
  - Been in contact with the blood or body fluids (such as: vomit, diarrhea, urine, breast milk, sweat, semen) of a person with Ebola or who has died from Ebola,  
**AND**
  - Developed Ebola symptoms.
  - The incubation period for Ebola is 2-21 days  
**AND**
  - A person recovering from Ebola can still transmit the virus to other people for a period of time, believed to be up to 8 weeks..

## Who is at risk?

- The risk of catching Ebola in the general public is extremely low.

- Ebola is not spread by casual contact with someone who has traveled to countries in West Africa with Ebola outbreaks.
- Health care providers or family members caring for a person with Ebola are at highest risk because they may come in contact with blood or body fluids.

### How long does Ebola last outside the body?

- Ebola can survive from 1-2 days outside the body depending on things like temperature, humidity, pH, etc.

### How do you treat Ebola disease?

- There is no medication to cure Ebola and no vaccine to prevent it.
- Treatment for Ebola is supportive, meaning providing fluids, maintaining blood pressure, replacing lost blood.
- Seeking health care as soon as symptoms appear increases the chances of surviving. It also prevents other people from getting infected because they will not come into contact with blood and body fluids of infected people.

### What can we expect in the near future?

- It will take time for the Ebola outbreaks to be controlled in West Africa.
- Health care providers continue to follow standard practices so they do not come in contact with blood or body fluids of sick patients. They are also asking sick patients about recent travel to make sure they can rule out Ebola.