

FACT SHEET

Ebola Virus



WHAT IS EBOLA VIRUS DISEASE?

Ebola is a disease of humans and other primates. The Ebola virus causes an acute, serious illness which is often fatal if untreated. Ebola is a type of viral hemorrhagic fever, which can affect multiple organ systems in the body and impair the body's ability to regulate itself.

2014 EBOLA EPIDEMIC

The 2014 Ebola epidemic is the largest in history, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, primarily affecting multiple countries in West Africa including Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. Although tragically there has been one confirmed death in the United States (infection originated in Liberia), the risk of an Ebola outbreak in the U.S. is considered by experts to be very low.

WHAT IS THE BALTIMORE CITY HEALTH DEPARTMENT (BCHD) DOING?

BCHD is working closely with other city agencies, such as the Baltimore City Fire Department, who has established response protocols for handling EMS calls with complaints similar to symptoms of the disease. BCHD is also working with the Maryland Department of Health & Mental Hygiene (DHMH) and the CDC in monitoring the evolving national and global situation. DHMH is conducting disease surveillance and regularly communicates with, and distributes guidance to, Maryland hospitals and healthcare providers.

Management of communicable disease is a routine part of BCHD's daily work, and we already have infrastructure in place to handle infectious disease outbreaks. Our Office of Acute Communicable Diseases routinely and regularly monitors for the potential of the occurrence of infectious diseases and takes action to prevent or control potential outbreaks.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF EBOLA VIRUS DISEASE?

Ebola virus disease symptoms usually include fever. Other symptoms may include headache, diarrhea, vomiting, weakness, joint and muscle aches, stomach pain, lack of appetite and bleeding. The symptoms can be similar to other, more common, infections. Symptoms appear 2-21 days after exposure to the virus, but most commonly occur 8-10 days after exposure.



GET THE FACTS ON EBOLA

**YOU CAN'T GET EBOLA THROUGH AIR.
YOU CAN'T GET EBOLA THROUGH WATER.
YOU CAN'T GET EBOLA THROUGH FOOD IN THE U.S.**

EBOLA CAN ONLY SPREAD FROM CONTACT WITH THE **BLOOD OR BODY FLUIDS** OF A PERSON OR ANIMAL WHO IS SICK WITH OR HAS DIED FROM EBOLA.

AMERICA HAS THE BEST DOCTORS AND PUBLIC HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE WORLD AND WE ARE PREPARED TO RESPOND.

SOME IMPORTANT FACTS ABOUT EBOLA:

- You can't get Ebola through the air, water or food.
- Individuals who do not have a fever are not contagious and cannot transmit the disease to another person.
- An individual can only become infected with Ebola by:
 - Direct contact (i.e. through broken skin or through your eyes, nose, or mouth) with the blood or bodily fluids of a person who is sick with or who has died from Ebola.
 - Direct contact with contaminated objects, like needles.

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WHO IS AT RISK FOR EBOLA?

Individuals who have recently been in a country with known Ebola, and who also have:

- Contact with blood or other body fluids of a patient or dead body known to have or suspected to have Ebola, or
- Direct handling of bats, rodents or primates.

WHAT IS THE RISK OF EBOLA IN MARYLAND?

Currently, the risk of acquiring Ebola in Maryland is extremely low. If a case is identified, there are established infection control guidelines to prevent transmission.

WHAT IS THE TREATMENT FOR EBOLA?

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.

HOW CAN I PROTECT MYSELF AGAINST EBOLA?

To protect yourself from Ebola:

- 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.
- Initial symptoms of Ebola are similar to symptoms of the flu. We suggest getting vaccinated against the flu as early as possible.

WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE?

- BCHD has a dedicated webpage for Ebola information at <http://health.baltimorecity.gov/ebola>.
- An email address has also been set up for citizens with questions, Ebola.Info@baltimorecity.gov.
- Baltimore residents may also call 311 if they have questions.
- The CDC webpage for the most current information regarding Ebola is at <http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola>.
- DHMH has an Ebola information page at dhmh.maryland.gov/ebola.