

Ebola



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Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) also known as Ebola hemorrhagic fever (EHF) is a rare but severe viral illness. There are currently six identified subtypes. The fatality rate is typically 30–90%, averaging at around 50%.

HOW IT SPREADS

Ebola is spread through direct contact with the blood, bodily fluids, organs, or contaminated materials (bedding, clothing) of infected people or animals. It is NOT airborne and is NOT spread by mosquitoes or other insects.

The African fruit bat (*Rousettus aegyptiacus*) is the natural host. Humans are first infected through contact with infected animals (bats, primates), then person-to-person spread occurs.

People are only contagious once symptoms appear. Risk of transmission is low in early stages and much higher in late-stage illness.

SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

The incubation period is between 2–21 days (but is usually 5–7 days). Symptoms begin suddenly and include:

- Fever, headache, joint and muscle pain, sore throat, weakness
- These are usually followed by vomiting, diarrhoea, rash
- Then some develop internal and external bleeding, bruising, bleeding gums

Symptoms overlap with malaria, typhoid, cholera and other diseases — laboratory testing is required for diagnosis.

TREATMENT

There is no specific cure. Seek medical care immediately — early treatment improves survival. Supportive hospital treatment includes fluid replacement, oxygen, oral rehydration salts, nutrition support and infection management.

KEY INFORMATION FOR TRAVELLERS

- Risk of contracting EVD is low for travellers, as long as you avoid contact with symptomatic people, fruit bats and infected animals.
- Do not visit caves or mines inhabited by fruit bats.
- Avoid contact with or consumption of primates, wild animals, antelopes or rodents.
- Wash hands regularly with soap and water; or use alcohol-based sanitiser
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Monitor your health; seek immediate medical care if symptoms develop.
- Contact your doctor and inform of travel history if you become unwell within 21 days of returning.

KEY INFORMATION FOR PEOPLE WORKING IN AFFECTED AREAS

- Healthcare workers, veterinarians and laboratory staff are at highest risk — especially those handling infected patients or animals
- Always follow strict barrier nursing procedures; use appropriate PPE (gloves, gowns, eye protection, masks) when treating or caring for patients.
- Avoid any contact with corpses or their bodily fluids without full PPE.
- Avoid reuse or mishandling of needles and medical equipment.
- Report any potential exposure immediately to your supervisor.
- Regularly disinfect surfaces with hospital-grade disinfectants or bleach.
- Be aware that the Ebola virus can survive several hours on dry surfaces and several days in body fluids.

KEY INFORMATION FOR THOSE LIVING IN AFFECTED AREAS

- Avoid direct contact with anyone showing EVD symptoms; do not care for anyone family or patients without appropriate PPE.
- Don't join in traditional burial ceremonies with direct contact with the deceased.
- Avoid eating or handling fruit bats, primates or wild bush meat.
- Wash hands frequently with soap and water, even when they appear clean.
- Clean and disinfect household surfaces (bathrooms, kitchens) regularly with bleach or disinfectant.
- Wash contaminated clothing immediately in a washing machine (this kills the virus).
- Men recovered from EVD should use condoms or abstain from sex for 3 months.
- Seek medical care immediately if you or a family member develops symptoms — early treatment saves lives.

Disclaimer: While we endeavour to ensure that all information above is correct, Thrive Worldwide does not warrant the accuracy and completeness of the material. It is for information only and should not be used for self-diagnosis or self-treatment. Readers are always encouraged to seek medical or psychological help from a professional.

FURTHER SUPPORT

We have a number of ways we can support you before, during and after a big trip including:

Travel Health Essentials

A short interactive online course to equip travellers to keep well
thrive-s-site-6c1c.thinkific.com/courses/travel-health-essentials

Travel Health Consultation

Get the right vaccinations, medication and advice before travelling.
www.thrive-worldwide.org/service/travel-health-consultation/

Telemedicine Consultation

Speak with a trusted doctor wherever you are in the world
www.thrive-worldwide.org/service/telemedicine-consultation/

Pre / Mid / End Assignment Medical

An unhurried health review with an experienced travel health doctor – before, during or after a big assignment
www.thrive-worldwide.org/service/pre-mid-end-assignment-medical

Remote Medical Clearance

Ensure your staff are medically fit to travel or undertake a new role, even if they can't see a travel health doctor in person.
www.thrive-worldwide.org/service/remote-medical-clearance

