



What is Ebola Virus Disease?

Ebola virus disease is a severe, infectious disease that can be fatal (the case fatality rate of the 2014 outbreak in West Africa is about 50 percent). Early health care substantially increases a person's chance of survival.

Ebola is only spread through direct contact. Direct contact occurs when bodily fluids come in contact with broken skin or mucous membranes in, for example, the eyes, nose or mouth.

Ebola only spreads when people are sick. A patient must have symptoms to spread the disease to others.

Who is at risk?

Unless you have traveled to an affected West African country or cared for an Ebola patient, your chance for getting Ebola virus disease is very low.

Should I be concerned?

With the news of a confirmed death from Ebola in the United States, many Americans are concerned about the potential impact of this disease. Most deaths have been within Africa.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that "Ebola poses no substantial risk to the U.S. general population." Most Americans have no cause to be concerned for their own safety from Ebola.

What do I need to know about the symptoms or course of illness?

Ebola starts suddenly with a high fever. A person with Ebola feels very tired, has a headache and body aches and does not want to eat. The time from infection with the virus to the onset of symptoms is two to 21 days.

Stages of Ebola Virus Disease:

- ▶ The earliest stage of Ebola may include a high fever and extreme tiredness, often accompanied by appetite loss, headache and body pain.
- ▶ As disease progresses, the patient will begin to experience vomiting and diarrhea.
- ▶ In the last stages of the disease, blood will appear in a patient's vomit or stool. This is often followed by death within days.

- ▶ In non-fatal cases, the person may improve around days six to 11 and will no longer be infectious.

I am on information overload, how can I de-stress?

Stress, anxiety and fear increases with every report about the spread of the Ebola virus. These are normal reactions to a serious event. However, worry should not control your life. Here are a few tips for overcoming Ebola related anxiety:

- ▶ Prepare
 - Learn about Ebola virus disease
 - Learn about available services and supports
 - Learn about safety and security concerns
- ▶ Stay calm
 - Recognize the signs that you are stressed
 - Pay attention to your body, feelings and spirit
 - Spend time with family and friends
 - Take care of your physical health
 - Stay connected
 - Know when to get help

How can I help my family and others?

- ▶ Make sure they feel safe, connected to others, calm and hopeful
- ▶ Ensure access to social, physical and emotional support
- ▶ Help them to feel able to help themselves as individuals and as communities

What you can do.

Keep things in perspective. Limit worry and agitation by lessening the time you and your family spend watching or listening to upsetting media coverage. Although you'll want to keep informed, especially if you have loved ones in affected countries, remember to take a break from watching the news and focus on the things that are positive in your life and things you have control over.

Get the facts. Gather information that will help you accurately determine risks so that you can

Managing Your Fears About Ebola *(continued)*

take reasonable precautions, if appropriate. Find a credible source you can trust, such as your physician, a local or state public health agency or national and international resources such as the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Stay healthy. The risk of Ebola transmission is low, and a healthy lifestyle, including proper diet and exercise, is your best defense against any threat. Adopting hygienic habits, such as washing your hands regularly, will minimize your exposure to all types of germs and disease sources. Eat healthily, avoid alcohol and drugs and take a walk or other exercise. A healthy body can have a positive impact on your thoughts and emotions.

Keep connected. Maintaining social networks and activities can help maintain a sense of normalcy and provide valuable outlets for sharing feelings and relieving stress. This may also be an ideal time to become more involved with your community by receiving and sharing effective information obtained from reliable sources.

Seek additional help. Individuals who feel an overwhelming nervousness, a lingering sadness or other prolonged reaction that adversely affects their life, work or relationships should consult with a trained and experienced mental health professional. Psychologists can help people deal with extreme stress.

Available resources:

People experiencing signs of disaster-related distress should visit Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals at www.dhh.la.gov/StayCalm

SAMHSA Disaster Distress Helpline
(<http://disasterdistress.samhsa.gov/>)

Disaster Distress Helpline

PHONE: 1-800-985-5990 TEXT: "TalkWithUs" to 66746

This helpline provides 24/7, year-round crisis counseling and support.

Get the current facts about the Ebola outbreak at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control website: www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/index.html