

Concerned About Ebola?

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What is Ebola?

Ebola is a virus. It is an animal disease that humans get through close contact with the blood, fluids or organs of infected animals. The disease can then be passed from person to person.

What are the symptoms of Ebola?

Symptoms include fever, headache, body aches, diarrhea, vomiting, stomach pain and sometimes abnormal bleeding. Symptoms start from two to 21 days after a person comes in contact with the Ebola virus.

How is Ebola spread?

Ebola is almost always spread through direct contact with the blood, body fluids or excretions of a person sick with Ebola; through objects such as needles contaminated with their infected body fluids; or through direct contact with the body of a victim of Ebola.

What are ways that Ebola is NOT spread?

Ebola is not spread through the air or breathed in like a flu virus. Ebola is not spread through food or water. Ebola cannot be spread by an infected person before they have symptoms of the illness.

Who is at risk for Ebola?

For most people, the risk of catching Ebola is extremely low. People who care for Ebola patients or come in contact with the bodies of Ebola victims are at the highest risk because they may come into contact with blood or body fluids.

How can Ebola be prevented?

Contact with the bodily fluids of an infected person should be avoided to prevent the spread of Ebola. Gloves, face masks, eye protection and protective gowns should be worn to prevent Ebola from spreading from a patient to a caregiver. People who are at risk for Ebola (due to travel to high-risk areas or contact with infected persons) should quarantine themselves for at least 21 days.

How is Ebola treated?

Ebola patients are given fluids and lost blood is replaced. Ebola patients are isolated to prevent the spread of the disease. Currently, no licensed medication cures Ebola and no vaccine prevents it. Several experimental medications are currently being evaluated.

How do I know if I have Ebola?

First, you must have been in direct contact with the bodily fluids of another person who is actively ill with Ebola. At the present time, this would also imply that you have either traveled to areas in West Africa where the virus is active, and while there, had direct contact with ill persons; or, had direct exposure to bodily fluids of someone returning from those areas. While symptoms of Ebola can mimic those of colds and the flu, unless you meet this criteria, it is highly unlikely that you have contracted the Ebola virus.

**Some content adapted from DOH Publication 821-085*