What You Need to Know about Ebola

The 2014 Ebola epidemic is the largest in history

The outbreak is affecting multiple countries in West Africa and CDC has confirmed the **first travel-associated case of Ebola to be diagnosed in the United States**. About half the people who have gotten Ebola in this outbreak have died.

Although the risk of Ebola spreading in the United States is very low, CDC and its partners are taking actions to prevent this from happening.

A person infected with Ebola can't spread the disease until symptoms appear

The time from exposure to when signs or symptoms of the disease appear (the incubation period) is 2 to 21 days, but the average time is 8 to 10 days. Signs of Ebola include fever (higher than 101.5°F) and symptoms like severe headache, muscle pain, vomiting, diarrhea, stomach pain, or unexplained bleeding or bruising.

Ebola is spread through direct contact with blood and body fluids

Ebola is spread through **direct contact** (through broken skin or mucous membranes) with

- Blood and body fluids (like urine, feces, saliva, vomit, sweat, and semen) of a person who is sick with Ebola.
- Objects (like needles) that have been contaminated with the blood or body fluids of a person sick with Ebola.

Ebola is **not** spread through the air, water, or food.

Protect yourself against 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.

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.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Office of the Director
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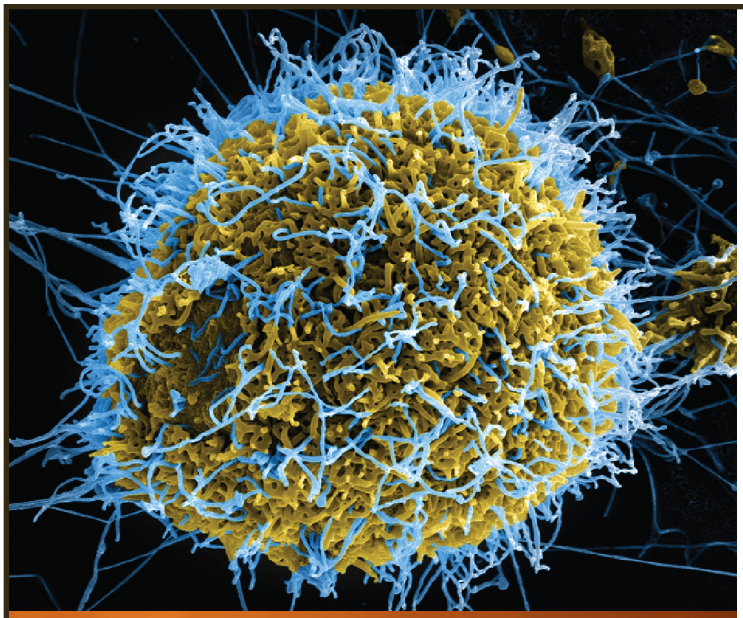

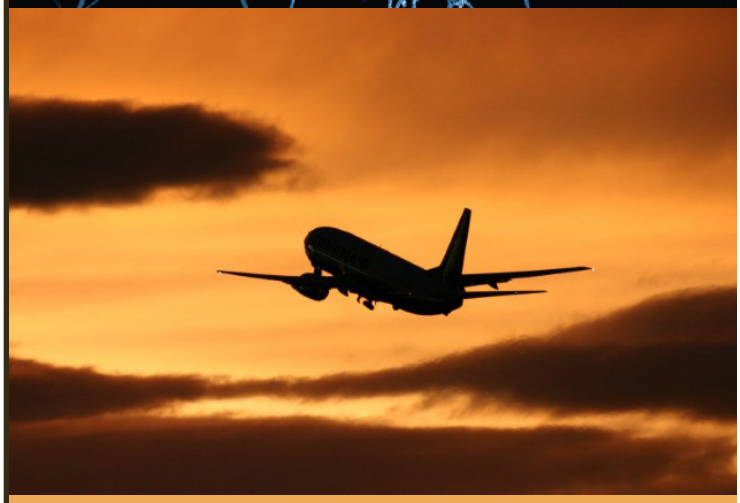

"We recognize that even a single case of Ebola in the United States seems threatening, but the simple truth is that we do know how to stop the spread of Ebola between people." *– Beth Bell, MD, MPH, Director of the National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases*

What to do if you are exposed to Ebola

If you have traveled to an area with an Ebola outbreak or had close contact with a person sick with Ebola, you may be at risk if you

- Had direct contact with blood or body fluids or items that came into contact with blood or body fluids from a person with Ebola.
- Touched bats or nonhuman primates (like apes or monkeys) or blood, fluids, or raw meat prepared from these animals.
- Went into hospitals where Ebola patients were being treated and had close contact with the patients.
- Touched the body of a person who died of Ebola.

You should check for signs and symptoms of Ebola for 21 days

- Take your temperature every morning and evening.
- Watch for other Ebola symptoms, like severe headache, muscle pain, vomiting, diarrhea, stomach pain, or unexplained bleeding or bruising.
- Call your doctor even if you do not have symptoms. The doctor can evaluate your exposure level and any symptoms and consult with public health authorities to determine if actions are needed.

During the time that you are watching for signs and symptoms, you can continue your normal activities, including going to work.

If you get sick after you come back from an area with an Ebola outbreak

- Get medical care right away if you have a fever (higher than 101.5°F), severe headache, muscle pain, vomiting, diarrhea, stomach pain, or unexplained bruising or bleeding.
- Tell your doctor about your recent travel to West Africa or contact with a person who was sick with Ebola and your symptoms **BEFORE** you go to the doctor's office or emergency room. Calling before you go to your doctor's office or emergency room will help the doctor or emergency room care for you and protect other people who may be in the office or emergency room.