How can I protect myself against Ebola?

If you are traveling to an area affected by Ebola, take these precautions:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Do not touch the body fluids of people sick with Ebola.
- Do not handle items (e.g., clothes, bedding, needles) that may have been in contact with the body fluids of a person sick with Ebola.
- Do not touch the body of a person who has died of Ebola.
- Avoid contact with wild animals that could carry Ebola, and avoid handling bushmeat.
- Avoid hospitals in West Africa where Ebola patients are being treated.

What are the symptoms of Ebola?

Symptoms appear 2-21 (usually 8-10) days after exposure to the virus. Symptoms of Ebola develop and get worse over several days.

- Severe headache
- Unexplained bleeding or bruising (from nose, mouth, skin)
- Vomiting
- Muscle/joint pain
- Fever over 100.4°F
- Extreme fatigue
- Stomach pain
- Diarrhea

Ebola symptoms DO NOT include symptoms such as: cough, sore throat and runny or stuffy nose.

Notice to travelers

For up-to-date reports on travel health notices and advisories, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) website at: www.cdc.gov/travel

Ebola virus disease in the U.S.

The CDC and its partners have implemented protocols and infection control procedures at sites of potential transmission to protect against further spread of the disease.

Based on material provided by the CDC.
For more information on CDC’s infection control and response measures, visit the CDC website at: www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola

EBOLA

Information about Ebola and how to protect yourself from the virus.
What is Ebola?
Ebola is a rare and deadly disease caused by infection with an Ebola virus.

How is Ebola spread?
Ebola is spread only through direct contact with:
- Bodily fluids (blood, diarrhea, saliva, sweat, vomit, urine, semen, breast milk) of someone who is sick with Ebola (has symptoms) or has died from Ebola.
- Contaminated objects or medical equipment.
- Infected fruit bats or primates (apes, monkeys).
- Possibly from contact with semen from a man who has recovered from Ebola.

People with Ebola cannot spread the virus until symptoms appear.
Ebola is spread when the virus comes into direct contact with mucous membranes (e.g., mouth, nose or eyes) or broken skin. Direct contact can happen by being splashed with droplets or by touching infectious bodily fluids.

Ebola can be spread through sexual contact, even after recovery. The virus is present in semen for up to 3 months after a man recovers from Ebola. People are advised to abstain from sex (including oral) for at least 3 months after recovery. Condoms provide some (but not complete) protection against infection.

What does “direct contact” mean?
Direct contact means that body fluids (including but not limited to blood, saliva, mucus, vomit, urine or feces) from an infected person (alive or dead) have touched someone’s eyes, nose or mouth or an open cut, wound or abrasion.

If you’re feeling sick, think flu not Ebola.
Although flu and Ebola have some similar symptoms, Ebola is a rare disease, particularly in the U.S. Flu is very common. To date, four cases of Ebola have been detected in the U.S., and two of those were imported from West Africa. Every year in the U.S., millions of people are infected with flu, hundreds of thousands are hospitalized, and tens of thousands die from flu.

Unless you have had direct contact with someone who is sick with Ebola, your symptoms are most likely caused by flu and you do not have Ebola.

What if I have been exposed to Ebola?
If you were exposed to Ebola, call your doctor to evaluate your risk. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends people with any risk of exposure to practice active monitoring or direct active monitoring by the health department or self-monitoring/observation, depending on the risk level for 21 days:
- Take your temperature twice a day.
- Check for other symptoms of Ebola (severe headache, fatigue, muscle pain, vomiting, diarrhea, stomach pain, unexplained bruising or bleeding).
- Talk to your health department every day to report your temperature and if you have any symptoms.

If 21 days after exposure, you have not had any symptoms, you will not likely develop Ebola.

If you notice symptoms of Ebola, call the health department immediately.
Before going to a hospital or clinic, call ahead to inform the medical staff of your symptoms and possible exposure to Ebola. Medical staff will be better able to provide you with appropriate care and to prevent you from spreading the virus.

How is Ebola treated?
Efforts to develop vaccines and medications to treat Ebola are ongoing. Early intervention and supportive care can greatly improve an infected person’s chance of survival. This is done by providing intravenous (IV) fluids, balancing electrolytes (body salts), providing oxygen, maintaining blood pressure and treating or preventing other infections.

Is it possible to recover from Ebola?
Ebola is deadly, but it is possible to recover from the disease.

A person’s chance of recovery depends largely on good supportive care and on the strength of his or her immune response. Those who do recover develop antibodies that protect them for 10 years or more.