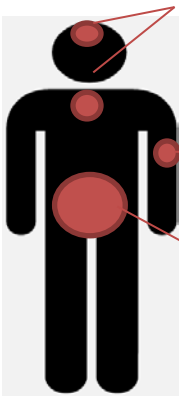


Ebola Fact Sheet

What is Ebola?

Ebola Virus Disease (EVD), also known as Ebola hemorrhagic fever (Ebola HF) is a severe, often fatal disease caused by infection with a species of Ebola virus. It first appeared in 1976 in two outbreaks in Nzara, Sudan and Yambuku, Democratic of Congo. Currently, there is an unprecedented outbreak in West Africa (Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Nigeria) with a fatality rate up to 90%.

Symptoms and effects

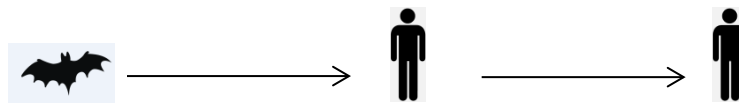


Symptoms of Ebola HF typically include fever (greater than 101.5 degrees Fahrenheit or 38.6 degrees Celsius), severe headache, joint and muscle aches, weakness, loss of appetite, vomiting, diarrhea or abdominal pain. Some may experience a rash, sore throat, difficulty swallowing, difficulty breathing or chest pain.

The infection attacks every tissue and organ of the body, except the skeletal muscles and bones. Clots in the blood vessels slow down the blood supply to organs in the body, which in turn can leave the organs severely damaged eventually leading to loss of function. Internal bleeding can occur as well as aching muscle or joints.

The incubation period, which is the time interval from becoming infected to the starting of symptoms, is 2-21 days (although 8-10 days is most common). Patients can become contagious, or are able to spread Ebola HF easily once these symptoms occur.

How is it transmitted?



Ebola HF can spread to humans after being in contact with blood, organs, bodily fluids, and secretions of infected animals. These West African animals include fruit bats, monkeys, chimpanzees, gorillas, forest antelope, and porcupines. Once a person comes into contact with an infected animal and symptoms occur, the virus can spread from human to human via direct contact with blood or bodily fluids (stool, urine, saliva, semen, breast milk, vomit, sweat, nasal secretions) of another infected person. It's also possible for someone to be infected with Ebola HF by touching contaminated objects that have been touched by infected persons. Those infected with the Ebola HF virus are contagious whether showing symptoms, in the later stages of their disease and even postmortem. The virus can be in semen for up to 61 days after the onset of the illness.

Prevention Methods

Prevention presents many challenges as there is no current vaccine. Tips that can help include:

- Stay away from sick individuals, or those thought to be infected with Ebola HF. Do not touch their body, bodily fluids, or objects contaminated with their fluids.
- Avoid unnecessary travel to areas in which there are current outbreaks.
- People who have been exposed to Ebola HF should not travel on commercial airplanes until there is a period of monitoring for symptoms of illness lasting 21 days after exposure.
- Sick travelers should delay travel until cleared to travel by a doctor or public health authority.
- Wash your hands often. The use of waterless alcohol-based hand sanitizer can be used if soap is unavailable.
- Avoid sexual contact with those suspected of having Ebola HF, as semen can carry the virus for up to 7 weeks.

Treatment

The Ebola HF outbreak is currently limited to West Africa, and it is unlikely that you would contract the disease. However, if you have traveled to an Ebola-affected country recently, ask yourself the following question: Have I come into contact with a sick person? If so, monitor your health for three weeks (21 days) and seek medical attention if symptoms occur. If you think you might have Ebola, please call the Utah Department of Health Bureau of Epidemiology at (801) 538-6191 so they can do an assessment on you before entering a hospital or health care facility. Other diseases, including Malaria, have similar symptoms as Ebola HF. Treatment of individuals with Ebola is limited to supportive therapy. It includes balancing fluids and electrolytes, maintaining oxygen status and blood pressure and treating for complicating infections.

For more information:

- <http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/> - Information about Ebola hemorrhagic fever and outbreaks from the CDC
- www.who.int/csr/disease/ebola/en/ - Information about Ebola virus and disease outbreaks from the WHO
- www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/001339.htm - Health information about Ebola hemorrhagic fever
- <http://www.who.int/csr/disease/ebola/geographic-ebola.jpg> - Map showing the geographic distribution of Ebola virus disease outbreaks in humans and animals worldwide