

Frequently Asked Questions

Ebola Virus Disease

1. What is Ebola Virus Disease (EBVD)?

Ebola Virus Disease is caused by Ebola virus.

2. Where does EBVD usually occur?

Confirmed cases of Ebola Virus Disease have been reported from Democratic Republic of Congo (Zaire), Gabon, Sudan, Ivory Coast, Uganda, Liberia, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Nigeria. No case has been reported from India.

3. What is the incubation period?

Incubation period of EBVD is 2-21 days.

4. Can a person transmit the disease during incubation period?

No

5. What are the symptoms of EBVD?

It presents as fever, headache, joint and muscle aches, weakness, diarrhea, vomiting, stomach pain, lack of appetite, and abnormal bleeding. Symptoms may appear within 2 to 21 days (commonly between 8-10 days) after exposure to ebolavirus.

6. What is the source of infection?

In Africa, fruit bats are considered to be the natural hosts of the Ebola virus. It is transmitted to humans through the close contact with the blood secretions, organs or other body fluids of infected animals like chimpanzees, gorillas, monkeys, fruit bats etc

7. How is human to human transmission of Ebola Virus occurring?

Ebola virus is transmitted through direct contact with the blood or bodily fluids of an infected symptomatic person or through exposure to objects (such as needles) that have been contaminated with infected secretions. It is not transmitted through air.

8. Who is most at risk?

During an outbreak, those at higher risk of infection are:

- health care workers (if they handle the patients without observing recommended universal precautions)
- contacts and family members of the patients coming in contact with blood or other secretions and body fluids of the patient.
- mourners who have direct contact with the bodies of the Ebola virus infected people as part of cremation/burial ceremonies;

9. Can a person get Ebola virus disease from contaminated food or water?

No. Ebola is not a food-borne illness. It is not a water-borne illness.

10. Can the Ebola virus disease be transmitted by a person who is infected but doesn't have any symptoms?

No. Individuals who are not symptomatic are not contagious. In order for the virus to be transmitted, an individual would have to have direct contact with an individual who is experiencing symptoms.

11. When should someone seek medical care?

If a person has been in an area known to have Ebola virus disease (West African Countries - Liberia, Guinea, Sierra Leone & Nigeria as on 5th August 2014) or in contact with a person known or suspected to have Ebola and they begin to have symptoms within 21 days of contact, they should seek medical care immediately by reporting to nearest hospital.

12. What is the treatment?

There is currently no specific treatment for this disease. However, by intensive supportive care the mortality can be reduced as well as the spread of the disease can be prevented by instituting specific infection control practices.

13. Is there Vaccine available for EBVD?

There is no vaccine against EBVD anywhere in the world as of now.

14. Can Ebola be prevented?

Yes, Ebola can be prevented by observing the following:

1. Close contact taking care of the patients should follow standard infection control practices.
2. Any person coming from Ebola affected Areas (as mentioned in Q. No11) or coming in contact with suspected or confirmed EBVD and develops symptoms within 21 days should immediately report to health care facility.
3. EBVD patient after cure should continue to follow infection control practices for a period of about two months.

Guidelines for health care providers

Health care workers if handle the patients without observing recommended universal precautions are at high risk of acquiring the infection. Therefore health workers while taking care of these patients should observe the following:

- In addition to standard universal precautions, health workers should strictly apply recommended infection control measures to avoid exposure to infected blood, fluids, or contaminated environments or objects – such as a patient’s soiled linen or used needles.
- They should use personal protection equipment such as individual gowns (impermeable), gloves, masks and goggles or face shields and shoe cover..
- They should not reuse protective equipment or clothing unless they have been properly disinfected with 1% bleach or phenolic products.
- They should change gloves between caring for each patient suspected of having Ebola and strictly follow hospital waste management guidelines.
- Invasive procedures that can expose medical doctors, nurses and others to infection should be carried out under strict, safe conditions. For aerosol generating procedures PPE should include respiratory protection N95 masks or higher and the procedure should be performed in airborne isolation room.
- Infected patients should be kept separate from other patients and healthy people, as much as possible.
- Dedicated medical equipment should be used (preferably disposable whenever possible)
- All non-dedicated, non-disposable medical equipment used for patient care should be cleaned and disinfected as per manufacturer’s instructions and hospital policies
- Use of injections and sharps should be limited.
- If the use of sharp objects cannot be avoided, ensure that the following precautions are observed:
 - Never replace the cap on a used needle.
 - Never direct the point of a used needle towards any part of the body.
 - Do not remove used needles from disposable syringes by hand, and do not bend, break or otherwise manipulate used needles by hand.
 - Never re-use syringes or needles.
 - Dispose of syringes, needles, scalpel blades and other sharp objects in appropriate, puncture-resistant containers.
 - Ensure that containers for sharps objects are placed as close as possible to the immediate area where the objects are being used (‘point of use’) to limit the distance between use and disposal, and ensure the containers remain upright at all times.
 - Ensure that the containers are securely sealed with a lid and replaced when $\frac{3}{4}$ full.

- Ensure the containers are placed in an area that is not easily accessible by visitors, particularly children (e.g. containers should not be placed on floors, or on the lower shelves of trolleys in areas where children might gain access).
- Closed, resistant shoes (e.g. boots) should be used by all individuals in the patient care area to avoid accidents with misplaced, contaminated sharp objects.