

# Ebola

## What is Ebola?

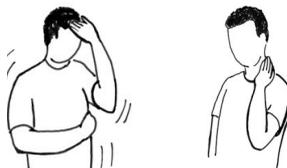
Ebola is a very real disease that has killed thousands of people in West, East, and Central Africa over a number of years. Currently, there is a very severe outbreak of Ebola in West Africa which has spread to four countries and has killed thousands of people. DR Congo has also had an outbreak unrelated to the one in West Africa. Knowing about this disease and how to prevent it is very important to keep you and your loved ones safe. For this reason, please read the following information, and share it with other people in your village. While there may not be any outbreaks in your area, it is important for you to know this information so that new outbreaks do not start. Follow any directions your government, health care workers, or supporting organizations give you concerning this disease to prevent the spread of it to other people.

Ebola is not caused by spirits or sorcery but by a tiny virus. The Ebola virus is an organism too small to see which lives inside a person's body and in their blood and other bodily fluids. You can catch it from sick people, objects that sick people have touched, and from handling and eating infected animals. This sickness kills more than half of those who catch the virus. There is no cure for the disease, but some people do survive the disease with God's help through medical care. Drug companies are working to find a cure, but this takes time. We can take preventive actions to keep from catching and spreading the virus, but we must rely on the guidance of trained medical workers when someone gets Ebola.

## What are the Symptoms of Ebola?

After a person is exposed to someone who is sick with Ebola, they may get sick 2 to 21 days later.

**Initial Symptoms Include:** Sudden fever (38.6°C), headache, joint and muscle pain, sore throat and intense weakness.



**Advancing Symptoms Include:**

Diarrhea and/or vomiting (may be black or bloody), rash, impaired kidney and liver function, and stomach pain.



**Some Patients May Develop:** Red eyes, hiccups, easy bruising, internal and external bleeding.



## How do people catch Ebola?

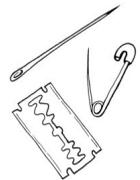
**From Animals to People:** The first way people catch Ebola is by handling, butchering, preparing, or eating raw bush meat that has the virus.

- You can get the virus through a cut or scrape on your skin that touches an infected animal.
- If you touch an infected animal then touch your mouth, nose, or eyes, the virus can pass from the animal to your fingers and then into your body.
- If you eat raw meat, dried meat, or the blood of a sick animal, the virus gets into your body.
- You should not touch or eat meat from a sick animal or an animal found dead.
- If you touch or eat fruit that was partly eaten by an infected animal, such as a bat, you could catch the virus.
- The animals most likely to carry the virus are: monkeys, chimpanzees, gorillas, fruit bats, deer, antelope/duikers, small rodents, porcupines, dogs, pigs.
- You cannot get sick from fully cooked meat.



**From Person to Person:** Outbreaks start when one person gets Ebola from an animal, then passes the virus to family members, friends, or others in close contact with them while they are sick or after they have died.

- If you touch a person with Ebola you could catch Ebola.
- If you touch the bodily fluids from someone who has Ebola you can catch Ebola.
- All bodily fluids of the sick carry the virus, including: blood, sweat, tears, saliva, semen, vaginal fluids, urine, stool, vomit.
- The Ebola virus may still be present in semen, vaginal fluids, and urine for 3 months following recovery.
- You can catch Ebola by touching soiled clothing, bed linen, needles, or razors of infected people.
- You can catch Ebola from the body of a person who died of the disease.
- Body washing rituals for a dead person are a primary way other people catch the disease.



## How to protect against Ebola

- Educating yourself and others about Ebola is critical for prevention.
- Wash hands regularly with soap and water and maintain personal hygiene.
- The DRC government has outlawed handshakes due to the current Ebola crisis in West Africa and northwestern DRC.



- Avoid traveling to places where Ebola is currently active.
- Avoid crowds and gatherings in communities who are on high alert for Ebola.
- Thoroughly cook your meat at all times, even when Ebola has not been present in your community.
- Use materials such as plastic bags to protect your hands if you must touch someone who is suspected of having Ebola.
- Change clothes and boots after touching or handling bush meat.
- Do not touch or wash people who have died from Ebola.
- Allow medical personnel to decontaminate and/or bury the body of anyone who is suspected to have died from Ebola. The body must be buried immediately by trained workers.
- Cooperate with any government, medical, or police imposed Quarantine. A quarantine is a temporary restriction on the movement of people (or animals) that are sick or who might have caught the virus. The goal is to prevent the spread of the disease.



## **What to do if Ebola is suspected**

- Pray to God and ask Him to bring you healing and protection for your loved ones.
- Avoid contact with others. Seek help and direction from authorities.
- Go to the nearest isolation unit or health facility. Warn them immediately that it may be Ebola and you need to be tested.
- Do not go to the herbalist/witchdoctor--they cannot help you.
- Do not try to care for individuals who have these symptoms in your own home or community unless you receive instruction and home care kits from medical workers first.
- Do not keep the sickness a secret from the authorities. This will not help the person heal, but will endanger your family and others.
- Help authorities identify anyone who might have been exposed to the virus.
- Ebola virus disease infections can only be confirmed through laboratory testing.
- Isolation and professional clinical treatment greatly increase a person's chance of survival.

## **Hope for those suffering from Ebola**

God cares for each of us both physically and spiritually. God is still working in our lives even when someone has Ebola. God can work through the sickness to open our eyes to our spiritual need for Him. Just as Ebola may bring death, our sins bring spiritual death and separate us from God our Creator. People may survive Ebola through medical care and God's intervention. But the only way to survive spiritual death is through a relationship with Jesus Christ. The Bible says that sin separates us from God (Romans 3.23). But God showed

His great love for us since Jesus died for our sins while we were still sinful (Romans 5.8). From the Bible we learn that if we confess with our mouths Jesus is Lord of our lives and believe in our hearts that God raised Him from the dead, we will be saved (Romans 10.9-10). Whether we live or die at the current time is up to God alone. But we can be comforted by knowing that those who die knowing Jesus will go to be with Him in Heaven when they die. We pray that you will find the peace and hope of knowing Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior. And we pray that by spreading the knowledge about Ebola many people will get the medical help they need to survive, and many more lives will be spared. Anyone who has survived Ebola and has been released by medical personnel should be welcomed back into the community. They are no longer contagious. By God's grace, they have survived!

## **Causes of Recent epidemics of Ebola**

**DR Congo:** A pregnant woman from Ikanamongo Village, Boende District, Equateur Province, caught the disease when she butchered some bush meat her husband brought her. When she went to the clinic, she infected the doctors and nurses because they did not know it was Ebola. The woman died on 11 August 2014, and all of the doctors and nurses have also died. As of 11 September, 62 people have become sick from Ebola in 4 villages and 35 of them have died. As many as 386 people may have been exposed to Ebola and are being watched for symptoms. This is the 7th outbreak of Ebola in Congo since it was discovered here in 1976. This outbreak of Ebola is not related to the current outbreak in West Africa.

**Guinea, West Africa:** The current outbreak in West Africa began with a 2-year old child who died 6 December 2013. Next, his mother, grandmother, and sister died of the disease. As of 7 September 2014 this outbreak has killed 557 in Guinea and has spread to crowded cities in 4 more countries: Liberia (1137 deaths), Sierra Leone (524 deaths), Nigeria (8 deaths), and Senegal (only 1 case so far).

**Sierra Leone, West Africa:** The disease spread to Sierra Leone because of one herbalist/witchdoctor who claimed to have special powers to cure the disease. People sick with Ebola crossed from Guinea to Sierra Leone to see her, then she got Ebola and died on 26 May 2014. At her funeral 14 women touched her body, and later died of Ebola. From these it kept spreading. This shows how Satan can use spirits, sorcery, and witchcraft to bring more suffering and death to human life through false religious teachings.

**Nigeria:** A young boy from Nigeria died of Ebola while visiting Liberia. His father got the disease and then returned to Nigeria on 20 July 2014. The cab driver who took him from the airport died, as well as the doctors and nurses who treated him.