

Ebola Virus Disease Fact Sheet

Toledo-Lucas County Health Department | Emergency Preparedness



What is Ebola?

Ebola, previously known as Ebola hemorrhagic fever, is a rare and deadly disease caused by infection with one of the Ebola virus species. Ebola can cause disease in humans and nonhuman primates (monkeys, gorilla, and chimpanzees). The natural reservoir host of Ebola virus remains unknown. However, researchers believe that the virus is animal-borne and that bats are most likely reservoirs. Four of the five virus strains occur in an animal host native to Africa.

What are the signs and symptoms of Ebola?

The symptoms of Ebola include:

- Fever
- Severe headache
- Muscle pain
- Weakness
- Fatigue
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Abdominal (stomach) pain
- Unexplained hemorrhage (bleeding or bruising)

Symptoms may appear anywhere from 2 to 21 days after exposure to Ebola, but the average is 8 to 10 days. Recovery from Ebola depends on good supportive clinical care and the patient's immune response. People who recover from Ebola develop antibodies that last for at least 10 years.

How is Ebola transmitted?

Because the natural reservoir host of Ebola viruses has not yet been identified, the way in which the virus first appears in a human at the start of an outbreak is unknown. However, scientists believe that the first patient became infected through contact with an infected animal such as a fruit bat or primate (apes or monkeys). When an infection occurs in humans, the virus can be spread to others through direct contact with

- Blood or body fluids (including urine, saliva, sweat, feces, vomit, breast milk, and semen) of a person who is sick with or has died from Ebola,
- Objects (like needles and syringes) that have been contaminated with body fluids from a person who is sick with Ebola or the body of a person who has died from Ebola,
- Infected fruit bats or primates (apes or monkeys), and
- Possibly from contact with semen from a man who has recovered from Ebola (for example, by having oral, vaginal, or anal sex).



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How is Ebola diagnosed?

Diagnosing Ebola in a person who has been infected for only a few days is difficult because the early symptoms, such as fever, are nonspecific to Ebola infection and often are seen in patients with more common diseases, such as malaria and typhoid fever. Ebola virus is detected in blood only after onset symptoms, most notable fever, which accompanies the rise in circulating virus within the patient's body. It may take up to 3 days after symptoms start for the virus to reach detectable levels. Laboratory tests are used to diagnosis Ebola.



What is the treatment for Ebola?

No FDA-approved vaccine or medicine is available for Ebola. Symptoms and complications are treated as they appear. The following basic interventions, when used early, can significantly improve the chances of survival:

- Providing intravenous fluids and balancing electrolytes
- Maintaining oxygen status and blood pressure
- Treating other infections if they occur

Recovery from Ebola depends on good supportive care and the patient's immune response. People who recover from Ebola infection develop antibodies that last for up to 10 years, possibly longer. It is not known if people who recover are immune for life or if they can become infected with a different species of Ebola.

For more information:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):
<https://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/index.html>

The Toledo-Lucas County Health Department is committed to providing relevant and timely information during a public health emergency.

For the latest information, please visit:
www.lucascountyhealth.com



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