

What is Ebola Disease?

Ebola disease is a rare but severe illness that affects humans and can be fatal. The average fatality rate is about 50%, though it has historically ranged from 25% to 90% in past outbreaks.¹

Ebola disease is caused by a group of viruses transmitted to humans through contact with infected animals. It can also spread person-to-person through blood, body fluids and contaminated surfaces.¹

Did you know?

There is no evidence that mosquitoes or other insects spread the viruses that cause Ebola disease.²

Symptoms

Ebola disease symptoms typically appear 2 to 21 days after exposure, with an average of 8 to 10 days.³

Ebola disease progresses in two stages:

Early stage ("dry" symptoms)⁴



Fever



Muscle and joint pain



Severe headache



Weakness and fatigue



Sore throat



Loss of appetite

Late stage ("wet" symptoms)⁴



Unexplained bleeding or bruising



Gastrointestinal symptoms such as abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting and/or diarrhea

Fact:

- Many common illnesses, such as influenza (flu), malaria, typhoid fever or pneumonia, may present similar symptoms.⁴
- Early medical care and symptom management can improve survival outcomes. Individuals with suspected exposure should seek immediate medical attention.

How Ebola Disease Spreads to Humans



Blood or body fluids
(e.g., urine, mucus, saliva, feces, vomit, semen)



Contaminated objects
(e.g., clothes, bedding, needles, medical equipment)



Infected animals
(e.g., fruit bats, nonhuman primates, forest antelopes)

Did you know?

Ebola virus can remain in certain human body fluids even after a person has recovered from symptoms.

Fact: Ebola viruses can be transmitted through physical contact with the body of a person who died of Ebola disease.

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Take Action

✕ Reduce Exposure Risk

- Avoid contact with people suspected or confirmed to have Ebola disease
- Follow proper safety protocols when handling the body of a person who has died from Ebola disease

✕ Promote Awareness and Training

- Establish policies and training on symptoms, transmission and risk factors
- Support infection prevention practices for healthcare workers in high-risk areas

✕ Practice Hand Hygiene

- Encourage frequent handwashing using soap and water
- Use an alcohol-based hand rub if soap and water are not available

✕ Use PPE and Safe Practices

- Wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), including gloves, gowns and eye protection
- Dispose of needles and sharps safely and properly

Clean and Disinfect Surfaces

✕ Clean and disinfect hard, non-porous surfaces that are:

- Frequently touched
- Soiled with body fluids
- In areas occupied by infected individuals

Fact: Ebola viruses can survive on dry surfaces, such as doorknobs and countertops, for several hours and for longer periods in body fluids such as blood.⁵

References and Further Information

1. World Health Organization (WHO). Ebola disease. (2025, April 24)
2. U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). How Ebola disease spreads. (2024, April 25)
3. U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Ebola disease basics. (2026, May 21)
4. U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Signs and symptoms of Ebola disease. (2024, April 23)
5. Minnesota Department of Health (MDH). Ebola: frequently asked questions. (2022, November 7)

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