

IDRS Infectious Disease Reporting System

Disease Reporting 24 Hours a Day

Columbus Public Health and Franklin County Public Health

EBOLA VIRUS DISEASE (EVD)

Ebola was discovered in 1976 near the Ebola River in what is now the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Since then, outbreaks have appeared sporadically in several African countries. The disease is caused by infection with Ebola virus, named after a river in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (formerly Zaire) in Africa, where it was first recognized. A major outbreak of > 20,000 cases occurred in West Africa in 2014. Five countries were involved: Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Sierra Leone and Nigeria.

Symptoms

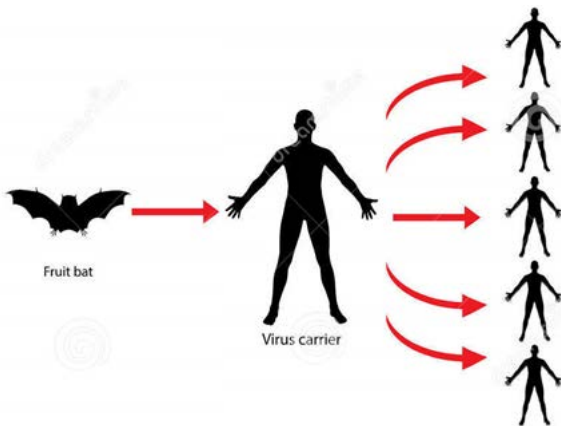
Symptoms appear 2- 21 days after exposure (average 8-10 days) and include:

- Early symptoms include fever, fatigue, muscle aches, loss of strength, and exhaustion.
- Severe diarrhea, vomiting, and stomach pain.
- Some patients have a rash, red eyes, hiccups and unusual bleeding.
- Severe cases may develop dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and seizures.



Transmission

- Fruit bats are most likely the main carriers of Ebola virus, although many mammals can be infected.
- The virus is spread through direct contact (through broken skin or mucous membranes) with blood and body fluids (urine, feces, saliva, vomit or semen) of a person sick with Ebola. The virus can spread through families and friends who come in close contact when caring for infected persons.
- Ebola virus can also spread by contact with contaminated objects, such as needles or equipment. For this reason, it is easy to transmit Ebola in underequipped healthcare settings.
- Ebola is not spread through the air or by water. In general, it is not spread by food; however, in Africa, Ebola may be spread by handling wild animals hunted for food.



Treatment

- There is no cure for Ebola. Some experimental treatments are available.
- Treatment focuses on caring for the ill person in a secure environment. Persons with Ebola need fluids, oxygen, and support to help their bodies fight the virus.
- People who recover from Ebola develop antibodies that protect them.

Prevention

- Researchers are trying to develop a vaccine for Ebola, but none is available yet.
- Prevention efforts involve providing safe treatment centers for sick people, proper burial of the dead, and tracking down all contacts of people infected with Ebola.
- Avoid close physical contact with infected people and their body fluids. Health care providers should wear protective clothing and properly disinfect or dispose of equipment used in treating or caring for patients with VHF, such as needles and thermometers.

All information is general in nature and is not intended to be used as a substitute for appropriate professional advice.



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