

Ebola Virus Disease

Public Health - Factsheet

What is Ebola virus disease?

Ebola virus disease is a serious illness where the Ebola virus spreads through the body and can cause fever and other symptoms in people.

The virus was first found in 1976 in remote parts of central Africa. The current outbreak is mainly in the West African countries of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms of Ebola include fever, tiredness, muscle aches, severe headache, red eyes, sore throat, vomiting and diarrhea that can be bloody. Fever is usually the first symptom of Ebola. Ebola can also cause kidney and liver problems. When the disease progresses, there may be a rash and bleeding from inside and outside the body. Ebola can cause death but early medical care increases the chances of survival.

How long does it take to get symptoms if you have been infected?

Symptoms start two to 21 days after infection.

How does Ebola spread?

Ebola is not easy to spread. Ebola can spread by contact with body fluids, primarily blood, vomit and feces of infected people; some animals (bats, monkeys and apes in Central or West Africa); or medical equipment that was in contact with infected body fluids, like needles.

Ebola is not spread through the air, by water, or in general, by food. However, in Africa, Ebola may be spread by handling bushmeat (African wild animals hunted for food).

You can't get Ebola from people who have no symptoms, even if they were recently in an affected country.

Just because someone who has recently been to an affected country is sick, it doesn't mean they have Ebola.

How is Ebola diagnosed?

Ebola is diagnosed by a blood test. Because the National Microbiology Lab is in Winnipeg, lab results are available quickly.

Can Ebola be cured?

People can recover from Ebola when they receive proper and timely medical care for their symptoms. Scientists are working on developing a vaccine and treatment options for Ebola.

Should I worry about Ebola?

It's normal to be concerned and have questions about Ebola. That is why it's important to get the facts about Ebola and to keep things in perspective. Chances of Ebola coming to Manitoba are very low, and there has been no case of Ebola in Canada.

Travelers from countries affected by Ebola do not arrive directly in Manitoba. They are screened at major airports in other countries and again when arriving in Canada.

As part of enhanced border measures implemented by the Government of Canada, local public health monitors all travelers arriving from affected countries, and gives them instructions on what to do if they get symptoms.

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What is Manitoba doing to prepare?

Manitoba is well prepared. Plans are in place for the rare event that a case of Ebola comes to Manitoba.

Manitoba Health, Healthy Living and Seniors is actively monitoring the ongoing Ebola outbreak in West Africa, and is working with the Public Health Agency of Canada, Regional Health Authorities and other partners.

Health care providers in Manitoba continue to be trained on how to safely screen, assess, isolate, transport and treat someone suspected of having Ebola. Systems and procedures are in place to prevent the spread of infection and provide the best care possible.

Where can I get more information?

For more information visit:
manitoba.ca/health/publichealth/diseases/ebola,
or call Health Links-Info Santé in Winnipeg at 204-788-8200; toll-free elsewhere in Manitoba at 1-888-315-9257.