

EBOLA

Despite recent cases, the risk of Ebola spreading in the United States remains low. Nonetheless, Story County Public Health is working with area healthcare facilities, Centers for Disease Control and the Iowa Department of Public Health to help disseminate important information about Ebola.

How Ebola is and is not spread

Ebola is not spread through the air, water or food.

Ebola is spread through direct contact (through broken skin or mucous membranes) with blood and body fluids (urine, feces, saliva, vomit, sweat, and semen) of a person who is sick with Ebola. It can also spread via objects, such as needles, that have been contaminated with the blood or body fluids of a person sick with Ebola.

A person infected with Ebola can't spread the disease until symptoms appear.

The time from exposure to when signs or symptoms of the disease appear (the incubation period) is 2 to 21 days, but the average time is 8 to 10 days. Signs of Ebola include fever (higher than 101.5°F) and symptoms like severe headache, muscle pain, vomiting, diarrhea, stomach pain, or unexplained bleeding or bruising.

There is no FDA-approved vaccine available for Ebola. Experimental vaccines and treatments for Ebola are under development, but they have not yet been fully tested for safety or effectiveness.

How to protect yourself

- DO wash your hands often with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- DO NOT touch the blood or body fluids, such as urine, feces, saliva, vomit, sweat, and semen, of people who are sick.
- DO NOT handle items that may have come in contact with a sick person's blood or body fluids, such as clothes, bedding, needles, or medical equipment.
- DO NOT touch the body of someone who has died of Ebola.

Ebola Exposure

If you have traveled to an area with an Ebola outbreak or had close contact with a person sick with Ebola, you may be at risk if you:

- Had direct contact with blood or body fluids or items that came into contact with blood or body fluids from a person with Ebola.
- Touched bats or nonhuman primates (such as apes or monkeys) or blood, fluids, or raw meat prepared from these animals.
- Went into hospitals where Ebola patients were being treated and had close contact with the patients.
- Touched the body of a person who died of Ebola.

You should check for signs and symptoms of Ebola for 21 days, including:

- Take your temperature every morning and evening.
- Watch for other Ebola symptoms, like severe headache, muscle pain, vomiting, diarrhea, stomach pain, or unexplained bleeding or bruising.
- Call your doctor even if you do not have symptoms. The doctor can evaluate your exposure level and any symptoms and consult with public health authorities to determine if actions are needed.
- During the time that you are watching for signs and symptoms, you can continue your normal activities, including going to work.

If you get sick after you come back from an area with an Ebola outbreak:

- Get medical care right away if you have a fever higher than 101.5°F, severe headache, muscle pain, vomiting, diarrhea, stomach pain, or unexplained bruising or bleeding.
- Tell your doctor about your recent travel to West Africa or contact with a person who was sick with Ebola and your symptoms before you go to the doctor's office or emergency room. Calling before you go to your doctor's office or emergency room will help the doctor or emergency room care for you and protect other people who may be in the office or emergency room.

For more information on Ebola, visit www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola.