

ARE YOU READY?



Get Ready

AN INITIATIVE OF THE
AMERICAN PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION

Ebola: What you need to know if you live in the U.S.

Ebola is a serious disease. It can often be deadly to humans. Because of this, many people are concerned about Ebola. However, if you live in the United States, it's very unlikely that you will be infected with the disease.

What is Ebola? Where does it come from?

Ebola is a disease that is caused by a virus. The virus is believed to be spread to people by wild animals. In humans, Ebola can be spread from a person who has symptoms to another person.

Ebola first appeared in 1976 in two outbreaks in Africa. Since then, there have been other outbreaks of Ebola in Africa.

In 2014, a serious Ebola outbreak was detected in West Africa, causing thousands of deaths. The disease spread beyond Africa when sick people traveled to other countries and brought the disease with them.

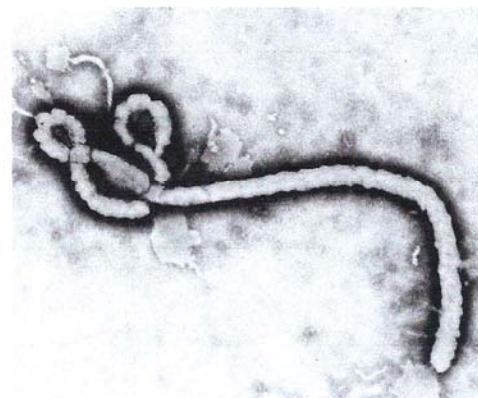


Image courtesy CDC Public Health Image Library, Frederick Murphy

How does Ebola spread between people?

Facts about Ebola in the U.S.

You can't get Ebola through water



You can't get Ebola through air



You can't get Ebola through food



Ebola is spread by direct contact – such as through broken skin or through your mouth, eyes or nose – with the body fluids of a person who is sick with the disease and has symptoms.

Objects with body fluids on them, such as needles, can also spread Ebola. Body fluids include blood, vomit, feces, saliva, semen, sweat and breast milk.

Ebola is not spread through the air or by water, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. It is not spread by food legally sold in the U.S. You can't catch Ebola from mosquitoes or other insects.

When Ebola is spread, it's often among those who have close contact with a sick person, such as their family. Health workers can also get Ebola while caring for patients with the disease.

You can only catch Ebola from people who are infected and have symptoms.

I live in the United States. Am I at risk for Ebola?

The risk of catching Ebola in the U.S. is very low. Few people have ever become infected with Ebola while in the United States. In fact, as of October 2014, only two people had become infected with Ebola while in America. They were both health workers who had cared for a sick patient who had traveled from Africa, where he caught the disease.

Another reason that you are unlikely to be at risk for Ebola is the U.S. health system. Unlike many countries in Africa, the U.S. has a strong public health network. This network works to detect dangerous diseases. It also helps prevent them from spreading. The U.S. has one of the world's most advanced health care systems.