



Ebola Fact Sheet

October 6, 2014

1. What is Ebola? - Ebola, previously known as Ebola Hemorrhagic Fever, is a rare and deadly disease caused by infection with one of the Ebola virus strains (Zaire, Sudan, Bundibugyo, or Tai Forest virus). Ebola viruses are found in several African countries. The first Ebola virus 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 Africa. Based on evidence and the nature of other similar viruses, researchers believe that Ebola virus is animal-borne with bats being the most likely reservoir.

2. How is Ebola spread? - The virus is spread through direct contact (through broken skin or unprotected mucous membranes in, for example, the eyes, nose, or mouth) with the blood or body fluids such as, but not limited to, feces, saliva, urine, vomit, and semen of a person who is sick with Ebola, or with objects like needles that have been contaminated with the virus, or infected animals. Ebola is not spread through the air or by water or, in general, by food; however, in Africa, Ebola may be spread as a result of handling bushmeat (wild animals hunted for food) and contact with infected bats.

3. What are the symptoms of Ebola? - Signs of Ebola include fever (greater than 38.6°C or 101.5°F) and additional symptoms, such as severe headache, muscle pain, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, or unexplained hemorrhage. The incubation period, from exposure to when signs or symptoms appear, ranges from 2 to 21 days, with an average of 8 to 10 days.

4. What treatments are available? - There is no drug treatment or vaccination for Ebola and there is no standard treatment for Ebola patients. Generally, patients receive supportive therapy which consists of balancing the patient's fluids and electrolytes, maintaining their oxygen status and blood pressure, and treating them for any complicating infections.

5. What control measures are available? - An attempt should be made to identify all people in close contact with infected individuals, including people living with or caring for the infected, or laboratory workers handling specimens. Those contacts should receive body temperature checks for at least three weeks. Immediate hospital isolation should be enacted for any contacts with fever at or above 101°F during this period.

6. What preventive measures are available? When caring for patients with Ebola, further transmission of the disease through person-to-person contact while in the hospital can be avoided by taking preventive measures against contact with patient secretions by implementing standard contact and droplet precautions. Such precautions include wearing protective clothing, such as masks, gloves, gowns, and goggles; using infection control measures, such as complete equipment sterilization; and isolating infected patients from contact with unprotected persons until the disease has run its course.

7. Please obtain the most current information available from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website by visiting: <http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/>

Montgomery County Health Department can be contacted at 610-278-5117

For After Hours, Evenings, Weekends and Holidays contact:

Montgomery County Police Radio at (610) 275-1222 and ask to speak to the person on-call for the Health Department