

Ebola virus (aka Ebola hemorrhagic fever)

What is it?

It is a virus spread from person to person, or animal to person through direct contact with contaminated body fluids. It is transmitted the same as HIV or Hepatitis B. Therefore healthcare workers, workers that dispose of sick bodies, intravenous drug users, people receiving blood transfusions and people having sex with an infected person are at risk. **If your job and lifestyle make you and your child at low risk for HIV and Hepatitis B, then it's the same for Ebola virus. It cannot be spread through the air, water, or casual contact.** It is endemic to countries with poor standards of hygiene and sanitation, poor health care and high risk sexual behaviors.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms start 2-21 days after exposure and include:

High fever (>103)

Headache, joint and muscle pain

Sore throat

Weakness and poor appetite

Stomach pain

Late stages: internal and external bleeding from eyes, nose, mouth and organs.

Is there a cure?

No. It is a virus, so the bleeding is controlled until body can heal itself. The CDC has some new treatments that you may have heard about on news, but it's not a cure and not widely available.

Should I be worried?

No. Ebola only spreads in countries with poor sanitation and poor health care. That is one reason it is so deadly, there isn't good health care in many parts of the world. If you or your child has travelled to or been in contact with anyone from the following list of countries in last month (2-21 day incubation) and develop any of the above symptoms, seek medical advice immediately.

Good hygiene and sanitation is all it takes to stop the spread of this illness.

Countries with outbreaks (past and present):

Democratic Republic of the Congo and ROC

Gabon or South Sudan

Ivory Coast or Uganda

South Africa or West Africa (Sierra Leone, Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria)

Go to www.cdc.gov for accurate details and updates

Kelly A. Johnson, MD 214-914-2480