



RC: 367921

■ Travel Clinic

■ General Practice

## EBOLA VIRUS

### INTRODUCTION

Following the recent outbreak of Ebola Virus Disease in West Africa and the confirmation of the first case in the country, we wish to share with you some basic information on the subject.

Ebola virus is a severe haemorrhagic feverish illness associated with a high death rate (about 90%). This deadly virus has led to the deaths of about 670 people in West Africa since February 2014.

The time interval between contact with the virus and developing the symptoms is about 2- 21 days.

There is really no cure for this disease. Therefore, raising awareness of the risk factors and the protective and preventive measures individuals can take is the way to reduce human infection and death.

### TRANSMISSION

- Ebola is introduced into the human population through close contact with the blood, secretions, organs or other bodily fluids of infected animals. In Africa, infection has been documented through the handling of infected chimpanzees, gorillas, fruit bats, monkeys, forest antelope and porcupines found ill or dead or in the rainforest.
- Ebola then spreads in the community through human-to-human transmission, with infection resulting from direct contact (through broken skin or mucous membranes) with the blood, secretions, organs or other bodily fluids of infected people, and indirect contact with environments contaminated with such fluids.
- Burial ceremonies in which mourners have direct contact with the body of the deceased person can also play a role in the transmission of Ebola.
- The few men who have recovered from the disease can still transmit the virus through their semen for up to 7 weeks after recovery from illness.

### SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- Sudden Onset of Fever,
- Intense Weakness,
- Muscle Pain,
- Headache,
- Sore Throat

This is followed by vomiting, diarrhoea, rash, impaired kidney and liver function, and in some cases, both internal and external bleeding.

### VACCINE AND TREATMENT

No licensed vaccine for Ebola virus disease (EVD) is available. Several vaccines are being tested, but none are available for clinical use.

No specific treatment is available. New drug therapies are being evaluated. Intensive supportive care with replacement of fluids and electrolytes is the only treatment that can be offered. Early commencement of treatment is very very important.



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## PREVENTION AND CONTROL

- Reducing the risk of wildlife-to-human transmission from contact with infected fruit bats or monkeys/apes and the consumption of their raw meat. Infected animals should be handled with gloves and other appropriate protective clothing. Animal products (blood and meat) should be thoroughly cooked before consumption.
- Reducing the risk of human-to-human transmission in the community arising from direct or close contact with infected patients, particularly with their body fluids. Close physical contact with Ebola patients should be avoided. Gloves and appropriate personal protective equipment should be worn when taking care of ill patients at home. Regular hand washing (Antimicrobial disinfectant of hand sanitizer) is required after visiting patients in hospital, as well as after taking care of patients at home.

## USEFUL PREVENTIVE TIPS

1. Avoid bat meat and bat products. Better still avoid bush meat or any meat you are not sure of its source.
2. Wash your hands frequently with detergent or soap using clean water.
3. Avoid trips to countries currently experiencing Ebola virus disease outbreak (Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone)
4. Get hand sanitizers for people to use in the office, schools, home and public places.
5. Avoid buying food stuffs, Clothing or other personal materials from Markets/Shops that share the same vicinity with live or roasted bush meat.
6. Be careful with hands when using railings on the stairs, door knobs and other utilities used by the public.
7. Gloves and other appropriate protective clothing should be worn when handling sick animals or their tissues.
8. People with flu-like symptoms and sudden fever should learn to sneeze into their elbows instead of into their hands. They should avoid public places.
9. Avoid Pig farms, Pig farms in Africa play a role in the amplification of infection because of the presence of fruit bats on these farms.

## PREVENTION IS BETTER THAN CURE!!!!

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