

Ebola FAQ for Non-Healthcare Agencies and Businesses in Southern Nevada

What is Ebola?

- Ebola is a disease caused by Ebola virus. It is considered a “hemorrhagic fever” because of its symptoms
- Symptoms include: fever, headache, joint and muscle aches, weakness, diarrhea, vomiting, stomach pain, lack of appetite, and abnormal bleeding (bleeding into internal organs and the skin, for example)
- In an average Ebola outbreak, around 50% of people die, but this has varied from 25% to 90% in past outbreaks.

How might I get exposed? Ebola is not the easiest disease to catch but it can happen.

- You have to have direct contact with someone who has Ebola and is experiencing symptoms
- The virus has to get into your blood (like from a needle stick) or onto your mucous membranes (like into your eyes or nose) to infect you
- If an exposure results in infection, symptoms usually appear 8-10 days later (but it can range from 2 to 21 days)

What situations do not put me at risk of catching Ebola?

- You are not at risk if you encounter someone who has no symptoms of Ebola, even if they have been infected. This is because people with Ebola are not contagious until they are physically ill (with fever or other symptoms)
- Ebola virus is not airborne and is not spread through food or water

How long does the virus survive outside the body?

- Ebola is killed with hospital-grade disinfectants (such as household bleach)
- Ebola dried on surfaces such as doorknobs and countertops can survive for several hours
- Ebola in body fluids (such as blood) can survive up to several days at room temperature

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How can I protect myself?

- Continue to use the standard safety precautions you would normally take when dealing with a potentially sick or bloody person

Is my family at risk if I become exposed?

- In order for your family to be at risk, you would have to be infected, then become ill with symptoms; just being exposed to someone with Ebola would not make you contagious unless you actually develop the disease
- In the unlikely event that you were to be exposed to a person with Ebola virus in Southern Nevada, the Health District would work with state, local and CDC officials to monitor your health and protect your family

How can I identify Ebola patients?

- The early symptoms of Ebola look a lot like the early symptoms of many other diseases: fever, fatigue, muscle pain, headache and sore throat. Later symptoms can include vomiting, diarrhea, rash, symptoms of impaired kidney and liver function and, in some cases, internal or external bleeding (such as blood oozing from the gums or blood in the stool). It is necessary to have other knowledge about the person to know whether these symptoms, particularly the early ones, are likely to represent an Ebola infection.
- Because the current outbreak is limited to several countries in West Africa, including Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria, Senegal and Sierra Leone, unless a person has recently been to one of those countries, the chance of him or her having Ebola are incredibly low. However...
- If a person has visited one of these countries in the past 21 days and has a fever, consider the possibility that this person may be infected with Ebola virus and take your standard precautions for dealing with a potentially sick person

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Has the person travelled from Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria, Senegal or Sierra Leone in the past 21 days?

Yes

Does the person have a fever?

Yes

Consider Ebola