

Ebola Virus Disease

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Ebola virus disease (or Ebola) is an illness caused by the Ebola virus. Early stages of the disease are characterized by flu-like symptoms, which can progress to bleeding, organ dysfunction and death. Ebola is spread through direct contact with the blood or body fluids of an infected person or animal. Outbreaks have been documented in several African countries since discovery of the virus in 1976.

Currently, there is no approved vaccination for Ebola. **There have been no cases of Ebola reported in British Columbia or elsewhere in Canada.**

For travel health notices related to Ebola, visit the [Public Health Agency of Canada: Travel Health Notices](#) webpage. If you have recently travelled to an affected area or if you have been in close contact with someone who was diagnosed with Ebola and you have symptoms of the disease, contact HealthLink BC **8-1-1** or your health care provider as soon as possible.

What are the symptoms of Ebola?

Ebola symptoms may appear anywhere from 2 to 21 days after exposure to the virus. Initial symptoms include:

- Fever
- Weakness
- Fatigue
- Muscle pain
- Severe headache
- Rash

- Abdominal pain
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Sore throat
- Redness of the eyes

How does the Ebola virus spread?

- The Ebola virus originates from wild animals such as chimpanzees, gorillas, fruit bats and monkeys. It can spread to humans through direct contact with the blood, secretions, organs or other bodily fluids of infected animals
- The Ebola virus does not spread easily from person to person or through casual contact
- You can only catch Ebola if you have direct contact with body fluids of an infected animal or person. Direct contact is through broken skin or mucous membranes like the eyes, nose or mouth with fluids like blood, sweat, saliva, vomit, urine or feces.
- Those infected with Ebola are only contagious once they begin to show symptoms
- People with Ebola are most infectious during the late stages of the infections when they are very ill

Ebola is not transmitted through the air. Ebola is not transmitted in food or water. If you take appropriate precautions, the risk of getting Ebola is very low.

How do I know if I have been exposed to Ebola?

You can only catch Ebola if you have had direct contact with infected body fluids. These include bloods, sweat, saliva, vomit, urine and feces.

If you have recently travelled to an affected area, or if you have been in close contact with someone who has been diagnosed with Ebola, and you have any symptoms associated with Ebola, contact HealthLink BC at **8-1-1** or your health care provider as soon as possible.

For information on Ebola, including information about current outbreaks, visit the Public Health Agency of Canada [Ebola Virus Disease](#) web page. For travel health notices related to Ebola, visit the Public Health Agency of Canada [Travel Health Notices](#) web page.

For Health Care Workers

Health care workers who are working with infected patients and laboratory workers working with the Ebola virus are at higher risk of Ebola exposure. For information about what health professionals need to know about Ebola, what happens if an employee is exposed to Ebola, how to do self-monitoring, and what happens if an employee has Ebola, see:

- [BC Centre for Disease Control: Clinical Resources/Ebola](#)
- [Government of Canada: Ebola Virus Disease – Health Professionals](#)

Useful Websites

BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC)

The BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) is an agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority. They provide provincial and national leadership in public health through surveillance, detection, prevention and consultation. Learn more about [Ebola](#) on the BCCDC website.

Government of Canada

Find more information about the Ebola virus disease, including [symptoms and treatment](#), on the Government of Canada's website.

World Health Organization (WHO)

The World Health Organization (WHO) provides leadership on global health matters, including monitoring and assessing health issues such as Ebola, providing technical support to countries, and setting norms and standards. To learn more about Ebola, visit the [WHO fact sheet on Ebola virus disease](#).

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The information provided in the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) Health Feature has been adapted from the World Health Organization (WHO) fact sheet [Ebola virus disease](#), accessed July 29 2014, the BCCDC [Ebola Overview](#), accessed October 21 2014, and the Public Health Agency of Canada handout [Have YOU travelled from Africa recently?](#), accessed October 24 2014.

For more HealthLinkBC File topics, visit www.HealthLinkBC.ca/healthfiles or your local public health unit. For non-emergency health information and advice in B.C. visit www.HealthLinkBC.ca or call **8-1-1** (toll-free). For the deaf and hard of hearing, call **7-1-1**. Translation services are available in more than 130 languages on request.