Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Ebola Virus Disease (Ebola)

1. What is Ebola?

Ebola is a rare disease that has caused outbreaks (more disease than usual) in West Africa. Right now, there is a large Ebola outbreak in countries, like Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Liberia.

2. How does Ebola spread?

Ebola spreads from person-to-person by direct contact with a patient's body fluids, like saliva, blood, vomit, urine, feces, and sweat. The virus gets into the body through broken skin or mucous membranes (spongy skin like the kind you find in your nose or mouth). Ebola can also be spread by infected objects, like needles, that have been tainted with body fluids. Ebola can also spread after death, when preparing the patient's body for burial. Ebola can't spread through the air, in food, or water.

It takes 8–10 days for most people to get symptoms, but it can range from 2–21 days. Patients can spread the virus while they have a fever or other symptoms. People who don't have symptoms can't spread Ebola.

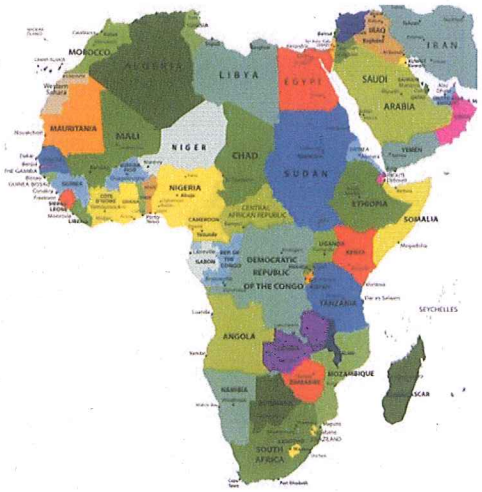
3. What are the symptoms of Ebola?

Ebola can cause these signs of disease:

- Headache
- Fever
- Weakness
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Stomach pain
- Lack of appetite
- Abnormal bleeding

4. How is Ebola treated?

There is no specific medicine or vaccine for Ebola. Instead, treatment focuses on keeping the patient alive by giving fluids and managing the serious health problems that can happen.



Key Points:

- The risk of getting sick with Ebola is very low in the U.S. and in LA County.
- Ebola patients can only spread the disease when they have symptoms.
- A person must have direct contact with a patient's body fluids to be infected.
- The department is taking safety measures to prevent its spread in LA County, if a case were to come here.

For more information:

Los Angeles County, Department of Public Health
http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/ebola.htm

California Department of Public Health
http://cdph.ca.gov/programs/cder/Pages/Ebola.aspx

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/outbreaks/guinea/qa.html?mobile=no content

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5. What can you do to prevent Ebola?

There is very low to no risk of spread to the public. The key is to avoid contact with anyone who is sick with Ebola. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention ask that the U.S. public avoid unnecessary travel to countries in West Africa that are currently affected by Ebola, since travelers may not have access to the health care they need if they get sick. If you recently visited one of these countries, and had contact with someone who had Ebola, see your doctor and mention your recent travel. Even if you did not have contact with someone who had Ebola, take your temperature two times each day. If you get a fever or other symptoms within 21 days of your return to the U.S., call your doctor and mention your recent travel.

6. What is the Department of Public Health doing to prevent Ebola in LA County?

Right now there are no cases of Ebola in LA County. We are taking safety measures to prevent and stop its spread in LA County if a case were to come here. For example, we are working with:

- Doctors and hospitals in the County, the CDC and the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) to find anyone who could have the disease.
- The Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) to identify any person with signs of disease coming from the outbreak area.
- Doctors and hospitals in LA County to make sure they use good infection control practices to prevent the possible spread of Ebola if they see a patient who may have the illness.

Want to learn more about the current outbreak?

For information about past and current cases and deaths by country, visit:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/outbreaks/guinea/index.html

World Health Organization (WHO)
http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs103/en/

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