

## Ebola virus disease – Information to travellers



### What is Ebola virus disease?

Ebola is a rare severe disease, often fatal, caused by the Ebola virus.

It is transmitted through direct contact with blood or other bodily fluids (e.g. saliva, urine) from infected people, dead or alive. This includes unprotected sexual contact with patients up to seven weeks after they have recovered.

You can also catch the disease from direct contact with blood and other bodily fluids from wild animals, dead or alive, such as monkeys, forest antelopes and bats.

Ebola virus does not transmit through the air as influenza does.

After two days and up to 21 days following exposure to the virus the disease may start suddenly with fever, muscle aches, weakness, headache and sore throat.

The next stage of the disease is characterised by vomiting, diarrhoea, rash and malfunction of the liver and kidneys. Some patients also have profuse internal and external bleeding and multi-organ failure.

There is no specific vaccine or treatment for the disease.

### Risk of infection with Ebola virus and how to avoid it

Even if you are living in, or have travelled to, affected areas, the risk of infection with Ebola virus is extremely low, unless you have been directly exposed to bodily fluids of a dead or living infected person or animal. Contact with bodily fluids includes unprotected sexual contact with patients up to seven weeks after they have recovered.

Casual contact in public places with people that do not appear to be sick do not transmit Ebola. You cannot contract Ebola virus by handling money, groceries or swimming in a pool. Mosquitoes do not transmit the Ebola virus.

Ebola virus is easily killed by soap, bleach, sunlight, or drying. Machine washing clothes that have been contaminated with fluids will destroy Ebola virus. Ebola virus survives only a short time on surfaces that are in the sun or have dried.

### Outbreak in 2014

There is currently an outbreak of Ebola in **Guinea** and **Liberia**. The following information gives some advice for travellers arriving in, or departing from affected areas.

### Advice to people arriving in Guinea or Liberia

The risk that you will be exposed to the Ebola virus is extremely low. The following preventive measures should eliminate the risk of getting infected:

- **avoid direct contact with blood or bodily fluids of a patient or a corpse and with objects possibly contaminated;**
- **avoid close contact with wild animals and consumption of 'bush meat';**
- **avoid having unprotected sexual intercourse;**

## Advice to people departing from Guinea or Liberia

The risk that you have been exposed to the Ebola virus is extremely low. However:

If you develop fever, unexplained fatigue, diarrhoea or any other severe symptoms in the few weeks following a departure from a tropical area, you should:

- **Seek rapid medical attention mentioning your travel history**, since it may result from an infection like malaria that requires immediate investigation and treatment.

If you have been directly exposed to any bodily fluids from a dead or living infected person or animal, including unprotected sexual contact with patients that have recovered, you should:

- **Seek rapid medical attention mentioning your travel history.**
- **Contact the medical care facility by phone before your visit**, in order to enable medical personnel to use appropriate protection at the time of admission.