

Learning More About Ebola

Ebola hemorrhagic fever (EHF) is the disease caused by infection with an Ebola virus. It can be severe and life-threatening. In fact, it's fatal in 50-90 percent of cases.

Spreading the virus

The Ebola virus is common in parts of Africa, specifically in the primate and bat population. There is concern that the disease can spread to the United States through humans visiting infected areas. Under certain conditions, exposure to just one single viral particle can result in an infection. While the virus is not considered to be an airborne threat, it can still spread easily between people, making it a high-priority with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Symptoms

The symptoms of the Ebola virus are consistent with other types of illnesses, making it harder to diagnose and it could delay treatment. Early symptoms include:

- **Fever**
- **Muscle pain**
- **Headache**
- **Sore Throat**

Advanced symptoms include:

- **Nausea**
- **Vomiting**
- **Diarrhea**
- **Impaired organ function**
- **In some cases, rashes and bleeding**

Most symptoms appear within 2-21 days after an infection, and take about 14-21 days to run its course.

Preventing the spread

If you suspect a patient may have EHF, there are things you can do to help prevent it from spreading. Avoid using compressed air or water when cleaning surfaces. It could cause the virus to become airborne.

Proper hand hygiene, cleaning and decontaminating environmental surfaces and adequate air exchange and ventilation can also help prevent the spread of the virus.

The Ebola virus is covered by OSHA's Bloodborne Pathogens standard, and all safety guidelines set under that standard should be followed when dealing with the Ebola virus. That includes using Personal Protective Equipment and following infection control practices. Below is the CDC recommendations for what health care workers caring for patients with EHF should wear:

- Surgical scrubs or disposable garments under PPE
- Dedicated washable footwear
- Double gloves
- Boot covers that are waterproof and extend to at least mid-calf or leg covers
- Single use fluid-resistant impermeable gown that extends to at least mid-calf or coverall without integrated hood
- Disposable N95 or powered air-purifying respirator
- Disposable full-face shield
- Surgical hood that covers head and neck
- A waterproof apron that covers the torso to the mid-calf level should be used if the EHF patients have vomiting or diarrhea

For more information and additional risk management and prevention tools, visit: fwcruminsurance.com