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Ebola Virus Disease

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Ebola virus is an RNA virus that belongs to the Filoviridae/Filoviruses family. It causes Ebola virus disease and Ebola hemorrhagic fever.

There is currently an epidemic of Ebola virus disease in West Africa in the following countries: Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea. A handful of cases were reported in Nigeria and Senegal but at this time, it appears that the Nigerian outbreak has been contained.

Two days ago, the first case of Ebola virus disease in USA was diagnosed in a patient in Dallas, Texas.

How is Ebola Spread or Transmitted?

Ebola is spread from person to person through direct contact of broken skin or unprotected mucous membranes with body fluids (blood, vomitus, urine, feces and probably sweat) from a person with Ebola infection who has developed signs and symptoms of the illness.

Ebola is **NOT** spread through the air, water or in food.

In Africa, Ebola may be contracted through handling raw bush meat, wild animals' meat and bats.

Incubation period

It takes about 2-21 days from the date of transmission for the symptoms of Ebola virus disease to manifest.

Symptoms of Ebola Virus Disease

The symptoms are; fevers, chills, body pains, muscle pains, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, severe headaches, abdominal pain, rash, unexplained bleeding and non-specific flu-like symptoms.

The patient may have one or more of the above symptoms and not necessarily all at the same time.

Treatment

Treatment is mainly supportive care. There is no approved antiviral therapy or vaccine at this time. However, there are some vaccines and drugs that are being developed.

Prevention

Avoid contact with known or suspected cases of Ebola virus disease.

Make sure to wash your hands thoroughly as often as possible.

If your child has been exposed to a suspected or confirmed Ebola case, you should contact your physician and the school immediately. DO NOT BRING the child to school until he or she has been cleared by the physician or Public Health Department.

If you or a family member, friend or coworker recently travelled to West Africa and develops any of the listed symptoms, you should notify your physician immediately.

For further information, please visit CDC website www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola