

Ebola

“I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don’t be troubled or afraid.” John 14:27

Ebola—the word strikes fear into our hearts. It surely is a horrible disease, often with deadly outcomes. Ebola is a virus, and it is believed that it is carried by some African bats. In that case, the first infected person was probably someone who had an encounter with an infected bat. So what are we to do? We all just need to settle down!

Ebola was first identified in 1976 near the Ebola River in what is now called the Democratic Republic of Congo. There was a new outbreak of Ebola in 2014, and in September of that year, the first case of Ebola was discovered in the U.S. in a person who had recently returned from Africa. There were a few more cases diagnosed after that. Naturally, this is a concern to all Americans, and all peoples on earth. So let’s get the FACTS.

How is it spread? Well, you are not going to get it by sitting next to someone on an airplane or shaking hands. Ebola is a virus that must enter the body through a break in the skin or a mucus membrane—mouth, nose, eyes, etc. These areas must come into direct contact with blood or a bodily fluid—saliva, vomit, urine, etc. So casual contact would not put a person at risk. Also, a person infected with Ebola cannot spread the disease until he begins to show symptoms. Also, once a person recovers from Ebola, they can no longer spread the disease.

Who can get it? Only humans, monkeys, apes and bats can get the virus, or spread it to others. We cannot catch it in the air or from a water supply.

What are the symptoms? According to the Center for Disease Control:
Fever over 101.5F, Severe headache/Muscle pain, Unexplained bleeding or bruising, Vomiting/diarrhea, Stomach pain

Once again, a person cannot spread the disease until he shows symptom of it himself. These usually begin 8-10 days after coming into contact with a sick person’s bodily fluids, but it could be from 2-21 days afterward. Those at the greatest risk are healthcare workers who care for Ebola patients, and a patients close family or friends.

Treatment: At this time, there are no medications specifically for Ebola, so treatment is directed to their symptoms. Companies are working on antiviral medications, and some hold promise. Treatment consists of IV fluids, medications for blood pressure or breathing issues, rest and nutrition, and support of the body while it fights the virus on its own.

Prevention: Wash your hands!! With soap and warm water, Check travel advisories before going to an African country, Avoid intimate contact with anyone suspected to have been in contact with an infected person until the danger of Ebola passes (21 days), Avoid contact with the bodily fluids of monkeys, apes, and bats

My conclusion: It’s pretty easy to avoid Ebola. You are more likely to win the lottery and be hit by lightning on the same day! (OK, I made that up, but you get my point).

So, take a breath, wash your hands (always a great idea), and relax. Pray for those who must deal with this terrifying disease, and be very thankful that you do not.

More info: www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs103/en/ or www.cdc.gov