

## Ebola virus disease (EVD) - factsheet for contacts

**Information for people who may have been exposed to a case (a person with Ebola).**

**This factsheet provides information about the disease and what you need to do now.**

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The risk of acquiring Ebola virus disease (EVD or Ebola) is very low unless there has been direct physical contact with the bodily fluids of an infected person (alive or dead). You cannot catch Ebola just by sharing the same room or aircraft without close physical contact and/or direct exposure to the bodily fluids of an infected person.

### What is EVD?

EVD is a serious and often fatal disease caused by the Ebola virus. Early treatment at a hospital can help people survive the disease.

Even if there is a case in Australia, Ebola won't become widespread here like it has in some disadvantaged African countries.

### Symptoms?

Ebola virus can cause a serious illness with a sudden onset of fever, muscle and joint aches, weakness, and headache. This is followed by vomiting, diarrhoea, rash, and liver and kidney problems. Some people have lots of internal and external bleeding.

In disadvantaged countries over half of people with Ebola die of the disease.

### What should I do to monitor my health and for how long?

Public Health Unit (PHU) staff will contact you to assess your exposure. You will be provided with information about what you should do to monitor your health and what activities you should avoid, if any, for 21 days after your possible exposure to the Ebola virus.

It is known that early medical care for Ebola can be life-saving. It is very important to detect the earliest symptoms of Ebola. **If you become unwell, we will help you get treatment and minimise the risk to others.**

This may include measuring and recording your temperature with a thermometer twice a day and monitoring yourself for any other Ebola symptoms for 21 days after your exposure. To protect yourself and others during the monitoring period we recommend:

- you must be able to leave an event or public area immediately if you begin to feel ill
- you must be contactable by phone at all times
- discuss any travel plans with your PHU.

PHU authorities may contact you daily to check your health.

## What should I do if I become unwell?

If you have a temperature of 38°C or over, OR feel sick, withdraw from contact with others, stay at home and call **1300 066 055** in NSW to speak to your PHU. The PHU staff will help you and tell you what to do next. If you need immediate medical assistance dial 000 and advise them that you have been in an Ebola affected country.

If you become unwell, you should avoid direct physical contact with any other person, until you have been told it is okay to do so by the PHU, and always wash your hands carefully.

## How it spreads?

The Ebola virus is spread by touching someone who is sick with or who has died from Ebola infection or by touching their body fluids such as blood, vomit, diarrhoea, or sweat, or through sex.

It can also be spread by contact with objects contaminated with the bodily fluids of cases.

The Ebola virus does not spread through the air.

A person with Ebola can only spread the disease once they become sick.

In affected areas of Africa, people can catch an Ebola infection through close contact with the blood, secretions, organs or other bodily fluids of infected animals (e.g. through the hunting or preparation of "bushmeat").

## What can I do to protect myself and my family?

The most important thing is that if you become sick, try not to touch anyone else and call **1300 066 055** in NSW to speak to your PHU.

In general we recommend the following:

- wash your hands after going to the toilet
- wash your hands before preparing food
- don't share items that may have blood or bodily fluids on them, such as razors, toothbrushes and towels.

## How do I contact the relevant public health unit (PHU)?

In NSW, call **1300 066 055** to get through to your local public health unit. The PHU may also provide you with an additional number to call to report if you are unwell.