

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT EBOLA

Ebola is a disease, but it's very unlikely for people in the United States to get it. It's important that we know the facts so that we can educate our family and friends and stay healthy.

THE FACTS:

What is Ebola?

- Ebola is a rare virus that can make people very, very sick and sometimes die.
- Ebola was first found in bats in West Africa.
- Ebola IS scary for those who are sick – it causes people who are sick to feel very sore, have high fevers, bleeding and weakness.

How long has Ebola existed?

- Ebola is not new. It is a virus that has been in the world for almost 30 years.
- Currently, the Ebola outbreak is mostly in West Africa – in the countries of Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone where many people are sick right now and need help from doctors and nurses.

How do people get Ebola?

- Ebola is **ONLY** spread through body fluids when a sick person vomits or bleeds on someone else.
- Ebola is **NOT** spread by the air
 - It is very unlikely for someone in the US to catch Ebola. Very, very few people in the US have any chance of catching it because you can only get it from touching a sick person's body fluids (vomit, blood, urine).
 - To spread the virus, the person with it has to actually start to feel sick (have a fever, aches, or diarrhea).

DID YOU KNOW?

20% of all Americans will get the flu this year so it's much more likely for someone in the U.S. to get the flu than Ebola.

As flu season starts, it's important that we practice healthy habits to avoid the spread of sickness.

- Wash your hands regularly
- Cover your mouth when you sneeze or cough
- Get plenty of sleep and drink lots of water.

DO:

- Talk to your parents and teachers about Ebola.
- Ask questions and try to find the right answers.
- Help your friends understand the facts about Ebola.

DON'T:

- Freak-out. It's very unlikely you will get Ebola in the U.S and there are doctors, nurses and other adults working to help keep you safe.
- Trust everything you hear on TV or see on the internet. There have been many false reports. Watching too many news reports may make Ebola seem scarier than it is.

Teachable Moments from Ebola Outbreak for Children

Ebola can be a frightening disease. News and media reports often intentionally sensationalize stories around Ebola, creating fear and anxiety for children. Children will take their cue from the adults around them on how to feel and what to think about this outbreak. By talking with children about Ebola and learning together, parents, teachers and caregivers have the opportunity to discuss other topics

- Teach children about how diseases are spread and how children can help stop the spread of diseases.
 - Teach children about good hand-washing techniques
 - Remind children to not share germs with their classmates and friends.
 - Talk about importance of covering their cough and throwing away tissues right away.
 - Remind them that being healthy means getting plenty of sleep, eating nutritious food, drinking lots of water and being physically active.
 - Reinforce that healthy bodies have strong immune systems that do a better job fighting off infections off all kinds. These are good basic health practices that will help prevent colds, the flu and other diseases.
- Teach children about science and biology – i.e. what's the difference between a virus and bacteria.
 - A virus is _____ and is spread by _____
 - A bacteria is _____ and is spread by _____
- Teach children about geography and economics – i.e., children can learn about Africa and issues around poverty, health and development in child friendly ways.
 - Look at a map of the world with children and teach them about the counties most affected by this crisis: Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea. Help them learn that West Africa and the United States have similarities, but also many differences.
 - The U.S has strong emergency responders. We have a public health and response system that are able to respond to these situations. The U.S. has great hospitals, doctors and nurses who are trained to help care for people with Ebola. The doctors and nurses know how to identify Ebola and treat patients with the disease. As a nation, we have access to clean water, medicine and healthy food.
 - West African people are strong and compassionate just like you and me. However, the countries in West Africa are very poor. They have few hospitals, not many doctors or nurses and do not have same capacities as the United States. The Ebola outbreak is serious there because there are not enough hospitals, doctors, nurses and protection to treat the number of sick people so the disease keeps spreading. Children do not have same support as children in the United States and we need to support them as Ebola is VERY scary for them.
- Stress to children the importance of showing compassion and celebrating differences.
 - Even a sick person with Ebola is deserving of a friend to support and care for them. Think of ways that you can support the Ebola crisis or help families who are dealing with other emergencies locally and around the world.

- Acknowledge that this crisis IS scary and that there are many, very smart people all around the world trying to help.
 - Reassure your children that there are many very smart, good people all over the world who are working to help take care of people with the disease and find a treatment – as well as working hard to keep them safe. Reassure them that the world’s scientists and doctors have historically ALWAYS been successful finding a way to stop, prevent or treat all epidemics.
- Most importantly: remind children that they are safe and that you love them and will take care of them.
 - Reassure your children. Remind them, you are safe while you are here with me. Ebola is not common in the area where we live (the U.S.). And, there are many smart and skilled people in the US working hard to help keep them safe.

If you or your kids are interested in learning more, here are some great resources:

[CDC Infographics and Factsheets](#)

[Map of cases and World map](#)

[Washington Post Ebola report](#) (for parents)

[Infographic of how contagious Ebola really is](#)

[Kid’s Health Article on Ebola](#) (for middle school age)

http://childrensnational.org/primary-care/wellness-resources/ebola-virus-disease/talking-to-children?sc_lang=en



www.savethechildren.org