



THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA  
**MINISTRY OF HEALTH**

**FREQUENTLY ASKED  
QUESTIONS ABOUT**

**EBOLA**

**January 2025**

### 1. What is Ebola?

Ebola is a killer disease caused by a virus. Ebola virus is spread by contact with bats and monkeys and also by contact with a person infected by the Ebola virus. Ebola spreads quickly from person to person, kills in a short time BUT can be prevented. With early medical treatment the death rate can be significantly reduced.

### 2. Is an infected person contagious even if symptoms have not appeared?

A person infected with Ebola is not contagious before the symptoms appear. The incubation period is 2 to 21 days.

### 3. What are the signs and symptoms of Ebola?

A person suffering from Ebola presents the following signs and symptoms:

- High fever (brutal and prolonged)
- Abdominal pain
- Joint or body pain (especially the chest)
- Difficulty in swallowing
- Headache(s)
- Nausea, vomiting (can be bloody)
- Diarrhea (can be bloody)
- Dehydration (no tears, dry tongue, sunken eyes).
- Rash
- In some cases bleeding from the mouth, eyes, nose, ears and anus. It is important to note that a person is contagious only when they begin to have one or more signs of the disease.

## Signs and symptoms of Ebola



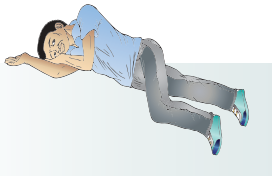
Sudden onset of fever



Headache



Muscle pain



Intense body weakness



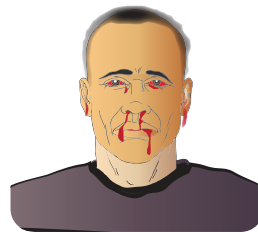
Sore throat



Vomiting



Bloody diarrhoea or urine



Bleeding from body openings

#### 4. Can a person with Ebola survive?

**Yes.** The chances of survival increase significantly if an infected person seeks medical treatment early.

#### 5. If a person infected by Ebola survives, is she/he contagious?

**No,** before returning home, Ebola patients WILL have their blood tested in the laboratory to ensure that the virus is no longer in their body. However, people who have recovered from the illness should NOT have sex for at least three months unless they use condoms.

#### 6. Can Ebola be transmitted by saliva?

**Yes.** The Ebola Virus can be transmitted by saliva and other bodily fluids such as stool, urine, semen, vaginal secretions, runny nose, as well as blood. When these fluids get in contact with broken skin, the eyes or the mouth of other people, they can get the Ebola virus.

#### 7. Can Ebola be transmitted by sweat?

**Yes.** Any body fluids of an infected person including sweat have the Ebola virus.

#### 8. Can Ebola be transmitted by shaking hands?

**Yes,** shaking hands with a person infected with Ebola transmits the disease.

#### 9. How should I greet people, if the hand shake is not recommended?

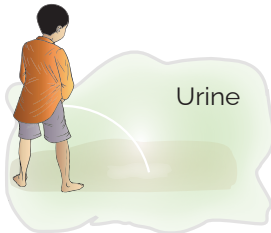
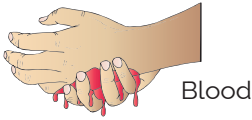
Hand shaking should be avoided as it is a risk during an Ebola outbreak or before a potential outbreak. You can greet people by waving to them or acknowledge by shaking your head. It is very important to wash your hands with soap and clean water regularly.

#### 10. What distance do I need to keep away from people suspected of having Ebola?

Specific distance does not matter. Ebola is transmitted by contact with body fluids from an infected person. However, if you know

any person suspected of Ebola, please report to the nearest health facility as soon as possible and listen to the advice from the health workers. Avoid touching and handling objects that have been used by a person suspected of having Ebola.

### Transmission of Ebola



Unsterilised equipment use by an infected person



Soiled clothing of an infected person



Handling wildlife whether alive or dead



## EBOLA AND ANIMAL TRANSMISSION

### 11. Why should I not eat bush-meat?

Do not eat bush-meat during an Ebola outbreak. Wild animals are the source of the Ebola virus. Monkeys, chimpanzees, bats and all dead animals found in the bush must NOT be touched or eaten.

### 12. If bush-meat is well cooked or smoked, is it safe to eat?

**No**, because during hunting, slaughtering and preparing bush-meat people are exposed to the Ebola Virus. That is how transmission occurs and the reason why people should avoid touching or eating bush-meat.

### 13. Do I need to avoid all bush-meat or just monkey and bat meat?

During an Ebola outbreak, avoid all bush-meat because it is very dangerous and can infect you with Ebola.

### 14. Can Ebola be in chickens, goats or cows?

**No**. There is no evidence linking Ebola and domestic animals such as chickens, goats and cows. It is only bush-meat that is dangerous.

### 15. Should I stop eating fish too?

**No**, fish is very safe. There is no evidence linking Ebola and Fish

### 16. Can I get Ebola through contact with urine and droppings of bats?

**Yes**, bats are carriers of the Ebola Virus. You can get Ebola if you are in contact with urine and/or droppings of infected bats. Avoid contact with bats and their body fluids including droppings before and during an Ebola outbreak.

### 17. During the rainy season, there are many bats and they feed on mangoes. Do I stop eating mangoes?

**No**, you can continue eating mangoes but wash them before eating. Do NOT eat mangoes that have been bitten by bats.

## TREATMENT OF EBOLA

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### 19. What do I do if I think I have Ebola?

You must go immediately to the nearest health facility for assessment and treatment.

### 20. Where can I buy medicine to treat Ebola?

There is no specific medicine for Ebola. Go to the nearest health facility for treatment early if you think you have Ebola. Your chances of survival and recovery are much higher if you seek early treatment and care from qualified health workers. You will receive supportive care and treatment of specific symptoms to improve survival.

### 21. I have heard that people are injected and killed at the health facility. Is this true?

This is a false rumour. Although people do die of Ebola some patients do recover. Chances of survival are greater when one starts treatment early. All Ebola patients receive the best medical care and treatment possible. The medical team is working hard to save their patients and to have them returned to their families. At the health facility the medical team treats Ebola by:

- Lowering the fever
  - Reducing the Pain
  - Providing good nutrition
  - Rehydration
  - Infection control
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- And any other supportive treatment the patient may require.

## BELIEFS:

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### 22. Is it true that a mix of ginger, honey, garlic, onion and vinegar can cure Ebola?

**No**, it is not true. There is no home remedy to treat Ebola. You must go to the nearest health facility for proper management and treatment if you or someone you suspect has an Ebola infection.



Your chances for survival are far much higher at an Ebola treatment unit than at home.

**23. We have heard that drinking alcohol prevents Ebola virus transmission. Is this true?**

**No**, it is not true. Alcohol does not prevent you from getting Ebola infection when exposed to the virus. In fact, excessive consumption of alcohol is harmful to your body.

**24. Is it true that Ebola is a curse?**

**No**, it is not true. Ebola is a viral disease transmitted to humans from infected wild animals. It can also be spread from an infected person to another person.

## REPORTING

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**25. Can I call a hotline or send an SMS to report suspected cases of Ebola?**

**Yes**, send a FREE SMS to Ureport on: 8500 or call toll free on: 0800 100066

**26. How effective is the surveillance system in Uganda?**

There is an effective surveillance system in place that can identify any suspected Ebola case occurring anywhere in the country. The country also has the capacity to test for Ebola virus at the Uganda Virus Research Institute in Entebbe.

**27. Can I care for a suspected person with Ebola at home?**

**No**, you are endangering the lives of your loved ones, your own life and those of the community, because the disease can easily spread from one person to another. Persons infected with Ebola must be treated and cared for at the health facility/hospital



## GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

### 28. What system has the Government put in place to screen people entering Uganda?

The Ministry of Health is working on distributing assessment questionnaires to all travellers entering Uganda. Health Officers at the official Points of Entry in Uganda have been trained on Ebola and are able to identify any suspicious cases on arrival and departure.

### 29. What plans does the Government have to send information about Ebola to the rural population?

The Government is conducting sensitization meetings with religious leaders, school authorities and community based organizations. Thus, information will be provided to the rural population from numerous sources. Communication materials such as posters and fact sheets have also been developed and are being disseminated to the affected high risk districts. TV, Radio and SMS is also being used to reach rural communities.

### 30. Does the Government plan to close the borders with its neighbours?

**No.** Currently, there is no plan for closing the borders or pose travel restrictions to the affected districts. However, people are called upon to remain vigilant by practicing the set prevention behaviours and also to report to the nearest health facility any persons they suspect to have signs and symptoms of Ebola.

**For more information on how to  
prevent Ebola Virus Disease, contact:  
Health Promotion, Education and Communication  
Department, Ministry of Health**

**Report all suspected cases to the nearest health facility  
immediately. OR send a FREE SMS to Ureport on: 8500 or  
call toll free on: 0800 100066 / 0800 203 033**

**Produced by the Department of Health Promotion, Education  
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