



Why Ebola is so dangerous

What is Ebola?

- 1) Ebola is a viral illness of which the initial symptoms can include a sudden fever, intense weakness, muscle pain and a sore throat, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). And that is just the beginning: subsequent stages are vomiting, diarrhoea and - in some cases - both internal and external bleeding.
- 2) The disease infects humans through close contact with infected animals, including chimpanzees, **fruit bats** and **forest antelope**.
- 3) It then spreads between humans by direct contact with infected blood, bodily fluids or organs, or indirectly through contact with contaminated environments. Even funerals of Ebola victims can be a risk, if mourners have direct contact with the body of the deceased.
- 4) The incubation period can last from two days to three weeks, and diagnosis is difficult. The human disease has so far been mostly limited to Africa, although one **strain** has **cropped up** in the Philippines.
- 5) Healthcare workers are at risk if they treat patients without taking the right precautions to avoid infection. People are infectious as long as their blood and **secretions** contain the virus - in some cases, up to seven weeks after they recover.
- 6) Ebola outbreaks occur primarily in remote villages in Central and West Africa, near tropical rainforests, says the WHO.
- 7) It was first discovered in the Democratic Republic of Congo in 1976 since when it has mostly affected countries further east, such as Uganda and Sudan.
- 8) This year's outbreak is unusual because it started in Guinea, which has never before been affected, and is spreading to urban areas.
- 9) From Nzerekore, a remote area of south-eastern Guinea, the virus has spread to the capital, Conakry, and neighbouring Liberia and Sierra Leone.
- 10) A man who flew from Liberia to Lagos in July was **quarantined** on his arrival and later died of Ebola - the first case in Nigeria. One of the nurses who treated him and an official who came into direct contact with him have since died.

Can cultural practices spread Ebola?

- 11) Ebola is spread through close physical contact with infected people. This is a problem for many in the West African countries currently affected by the outbreak, as practices around religion and death involve close physical contact.
- 12) Hugging is a normal part of religious worship in Liberia and Sierra Leone, and across the region the ritual preparation of bodies for burial involves washing, touching and kissing. Those with the highest status in society are often charged with washing and preparing the body. For a woman this can include braiding the hair, and for a man shaving the head.
- 13) All previous outbreaks were much smaller and occurred in places where Ebola was already known - in Uganda and the DR Congo for example. In those places the education message about avoiding contact has had years to enter the collective consciousness. In West Africa, there simply has not been the time for the necessary cultural shift.
- 14) The WHO also warns against consuming raw **bushmeat** and any contact with infected bats or monkeys and apes. Fruit bats in particular are considered a delicacy in the area of Guinea where the outbreak started.

What can be done if I catch it?

- 15) You must keep yourself isolated and seek professional help. Patients have a better chance of survival if they receive early treatment.
- 16) There are no vaccines, though some are being tested, along with new drug therapies. The WHO ruled in August that untested drugs can be used to treat patients in light of the scale of the current outbreak.

【09/05/2014/BBC より抜粋】 **fruit bat**: オオコウモリ **antelope**: レイヨウ (シカに似たウシ科の動物の総称) **strain**: 菌株 **crop up**: 突然出現する **secretion**: 分泌物 **quarantine**: 隔離する **bushmeat**: 野生動物の肉

★Ice breaker for active discussion★

1. What do you know about Ebola?
2. What precautions should we take to avoid Ebola?
3. Religious beliefs sometimes contradict with some medical practices like blood transfusion. How can we convince people or patients to accept such medical treatment when necessity arises?
4. If you were a nurse or a medical staff and you were asked to go to the infected areas to help people, what would you do?
5. If you were infected with Ebola, would you choose to use unapproved drug?
6. With the advancement of medicine, do you think it is possible to have a world without diseases?
7. Make sentences using the following words; viral, contaminate, strain, quarantine, survive, outbreak and vaccine.