



Ebola virus disease – Information to travellers

What is Ebola virus disease?

Ebola is a rare severe disease, often fatal, caused by the Ebola virus.

It is transmitted through direct contact with blood or other bodily fluids (e.g. saliva, urine) from infected people, dead or alive. This includes unprotected sexual contact with patients up to seven weeks after they have recovered.

You can also catch the disease from direct contact with blood and other bodily fluids from wild animals, dead or alive, such as monkeys, forest antelopes and bats, or by contact with contaminated objects.

Ebola virus does not transmit through the air as influenza does.

After two days and up to 21 days following exposure to the virus the disease may start suddenly with **fever, muscle aches, weakness, headache** and **sore throat**. This is followed by **vomiting, diarrhoea, rash**, and in some cases, **bleeding**.

There is no specific vaccine or treatment for the disease.

Risk of infection with Ebola virus and how to avoid it

Even if you are living in, or have travelled to, affected areas, the risk of infection with Ebola virus is low, unless you have been directly exposed to bodily fluids of a dead or living infected person or animal. Contact with bodily fluids includes unprotected sexual contact with patients up to seven weeks after they have recovered.

Casual contact in public places with people that do not appear to be sick do not transmit Ebola. You cannot contract Ebola virus by handling money, groceries or swimming in a pool. Mosquitoes do not transmit the Ebola virus.

Ebola virus is easily killed by soap, bleach, sunlight, or drying. Machine washing clothes that have been contaminated with fluids will destroy Ebola virus. Ebola virus survives only a short time on surfaces that are in the sun or have dried.

Outbreak in 2014

There is currently an outbreak of Ebola in **Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Nigeria**. The following information gives some advice for travellers arriving in, or departing from affected areas.





Advice to people returning from Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone or Nigeria

- **Contact the Public Health Authority on +356 21324086 upon arrival to Malta** for further advice and follow-up
- If you develop **fever**, with/without any associated symptoms (muscle aches, weakness, headaches, sore throat, vomiting, diarrhoea, rash, bruising, bleeding) in the **21 days** following your arrival:
 - **Stay at home and do not go to your GP/ Health Centre or to Casualty**
 - **Contact the Public Health Authority IMMEDIATELY**

Advice to people departing to Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone or Nigeria

The risk that you will be exposed to the Ebola virus is low. The following preventive measures should eliminate the risk of getting infected:

- **Avoid direct contact with blood or bodily fluids of a patient or a corpse and with objects possibly contaminated;**
- **Avoid close contact with wild animals and consumption of 'bush meat';**
- **Avoid having unprotected sexual intercourse;**
- **Practice careful hygiene**

If you develop symptoms whilst in the affected country:

- **Seek rapid and appropriate medical attention**
- **Contact medical personnel by phone before your visit**, in order to enable medical personnel to use appropriate protection at the time of admission
- **DO NOT TRAVEL**

If whilst in the affected country you become directly exposed to any bodily fluids from a dead or living infected person or animal, including unprotected sexual contact with patients that have recovered, you should:

- **Seek medical attention** mentioning your exposure
- **Do not travel until 21 days have elapsed** from the last exposure with infected case or source
- **Inform and liaise with Public Health Authorities in Malta IMMEDIATELY upon your return**

*For further information and advice please contact Public Health Helpline on **+356 21324086***

