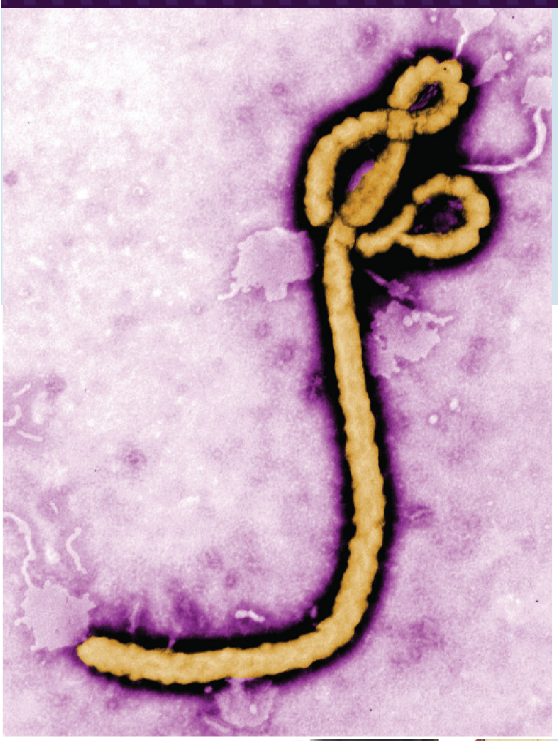
Ebola

The information in this PDF is no longer current or being updated. For current information on Ebola, visit CDC's **Ebola website**.

Ebola Information for Volunteers Working with West African Communities in the United States



I volunteer with an organization that serves people from West Africa. I am worried about getting Ebola.

It is normal to feel anxious or worried about coming in contact with people who have recently returned from countries where the Ebola epidemic is ongoing.

The risk of getting Ebola in the United States is very low, even when working with West African communities in the United States.

Two imported cases, including one death, and two locally acquired cases in healthcare workers were reported in the United States. CDC and partners are taking precautions to prevent additional cases of Ebola in the United States.

West Africans and West African communities in the United States may be facing stigma.

West Africans and West African communities in the United States may face stigma because the current Ebola outbreak is associated with a region of the world.

Stigma involves stereotyping and discriminating against an identifiable group of people, a place, or a nation.

- Stigma can occur when people associate an infectious disease, such as Ebola, with a population, even though not everyone in that population or from that region is specifically at risk for the disease (for example, West Africans living in the United States).
- Communities facing stigma can make fear and anxiety worsen.

Get the Facts on Ebola: www.cdc.gov/ebola

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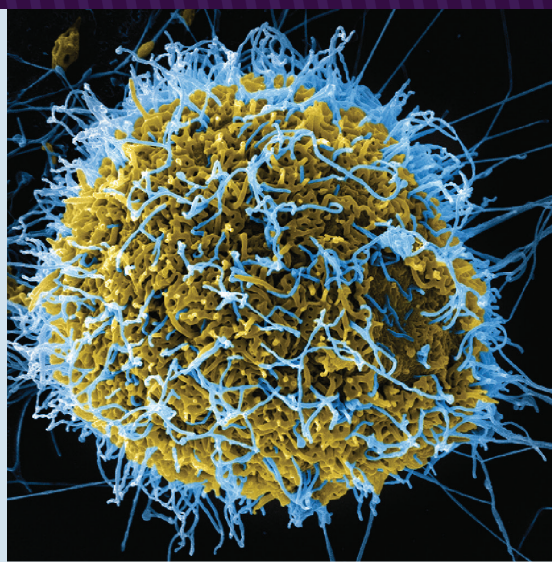
Ebola Facts: What You Need to Know

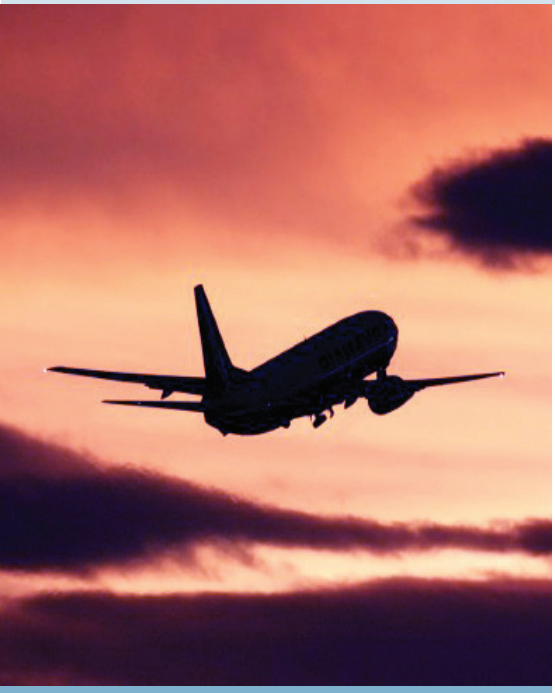
People of West African descent are not at more risk than other Americans if they have not recently traveled to the region.

- Remember, ethnic or racial backgrounds have nothing to do with getting infected with the Ebola virus.
- Viruses like Ebola can't target a particular population.



A person is only contagious after symptoms of Ebola begin.

Ebola is spread by direct contact with blood or body fluids of a person who is sick with or who has died from Ebola, or with objects like needles that have been contaminated with the virus. It is also possible that Ebola virus can be transmitted through the semen of men who have survived Ebola.



People who have recently returned from West Africa and have no symptoms of Ebola do not put others at risk.

- Countries in West Africa are screening at airports to help ensure that people sick with Ebola do not get on planes.
- CDC is implementing entry screening for travelers arriving from Guinea.
- CDC recommends that travelers who have been in Guinea, Liberia, or Sierra Leone watch their health for 21 days after leaving that country and call their health department or seek health care if they develop symptoms.
- Additional public health actions may be recommended depending on travelers' possible exposures to Ebola. Even if travelers were exposed, they are only contagious after they start to have symptoms.

You don't need to take any special precautions or wear any personal protective equipment while volunteering for West African communities in the United States.

- Follow your normal volunteer procedures.
- If you don't normally wear personal protective equipment (gloves, mask) when volunteering, you don't need to take any special precautions.
- Follow your normal "stay healthy" routine.
  - Wash your hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
  - Do NOT handle items that may have come in contact with a person's blood or body fluids.

Get the Facts on Ebola:

www.cdc.gov/ebola

If you come across someone who has just returned from West Africa and is sick, immediately contact your volunteer organization. Urge the person to seek medical care. If there is any chance that someone has been exposed to Ebola and is sick, they should immediately call 9-1-1 and tell the operator about the possible Ebola exposure.