

EBOLA: MESSAGES

LAST UPDATE: MARCH 2022

About the Message Library

People affected by disaster must have access to timely, appropriate and accurate information to help them keep themselves and their families safe and well. They should know their rights, entitlements and be able to give feedback. Responders have a duty to put in place appropriate, systematic and coordinated mechanisms to ensure this.

Our Message Library offers clear, concise and simple messages on a range of topics as templates for you to adapt and use in the context you are working in. These are intended to help you make a quick start on communicating with communities while you further develop mechanisms for on-going dialogue with diverse groups within each community.

For help contextualising and using the messages we recommend you do our e-learning course and read the following technical guidance.

E-learning

<https://kayaconnect.org/course/info.php?id=768>

Guidance

<https://www.cdacnetwork.org/tools-guidance/cdac-message-library-user-guidance>

What is Ebola

Ebola virus disease (EVD), formerly known as Ebola haemorrhagic fever, is a severe, often fatal illness affecting humans and other primates.

The virus is transmitted to people from wild animals (such as fruit bats, porcupines and non-human primates) and then spreads in the human population through direct contact with the blood, secretions, organs or other bodily fluids of infected people, and with surfaces and materials (e.g. bedding, clothing) contaminated with these fluids.

Ebola recovery information

If you have recovered from Ebola you cannot catch it again during this outbreak.

You can help the community by taking care of other sick people with Ebola. Follow hygiene rules so you do not carry the fluids of a sick person to other family or community members.

You can no longer infect others. However, men who recover from Ebola should wear a condom during sexual contact for at least 3 months after recovery as Ebola is present in the semen up to this time.

Safe Burial Practices - Information for those handling a person with Ebola who has died

If somebody in your family dies with suspected Ebola, immediately call the toll free Ebola Hotline at [insert info] for disinfection of the house and removal of the body.

Pay your respects without touching, kissing, cleaning or wrapping the body before burial or cremation. The body can be prayed over to complete religious practices, but at a safe distance or one meter, without touching. Ebola is very infectious even after death.

The body of a person with Ebola should only be handled by trained personnel using appropriate protection. Bodies should be buried or cremated by teams trained in safe burial procedures.

Under no circumstances should a body be touched or moved after burial. Wash your hands frequently with soap and water after every social contact.

Community mobilisation - What can you do to Stop Ebola in your community?

Begin by educating and protecting yourself, your family and your community. Contact your local political or community leader to devise ways to inform and engage your community. Also contact NGOs and INGOs and volunteer with them.

Speak with influential leaders like Chiefs, Traditional Leaders, Imams, Priests,

Pastors, women and youth groups, traditional healers, societal heads about their role in educating the community about how to prevent Ebola.

Volunteer with Community Health Workers going door-to-door educating the population.

Speak with teachers about the importance of creating theatre groups and other playful activities that provide children with educational opportunities about Ebola.

Speak with your neighbours about how you can organise yourselves and support prevention of Ebola.

Overarching Messages

Ebola is real and kills. But you can protect yourself, your family, and your community.

Be alert: help stop the spread of Ebola. Speak with your local community leader if you suspect someone with Ebola in your community or call the toll free Ebola Hotline [insert info] for advice.

Do not touch a sick person with suspected Ebola or someone who has died from Ebola.

Ebola causes sudden high fever, extreme tiredness, headache, body pain and loss of appetite. If you have a sudden high fever after contact with a person with Ebola or after attending a funeral, go to the nearest health facility.

Early treatment of Ebola at a health facility increases your chance of survival. By going to the health facility the moment you have symptoms, you protect your family and community and help stop the spread of the disease.

Wash your hands frequently with soap and water after every social contact.

Treatment - Information for those seeking treatment for a person with symptoms of Ebola

Free treatment for Ebola is available at health facilities.

It is always best to seek treatment at your nearest health facility. Early treatment increases your chance of survival compared to staying at home.

At the health facility the medical team provides treatment of the disease by: lowering the fever, providing rehydration and good nutrition, reducing pain and controlling infection.

Going to the health clinic the moment you have signs and symptoms protects your family and your community and prevents the spread of the disease.

Do not care for a sick person at home. Entire families get sick and die from treating one person at home.

If you or someone in your family or community is sick, immediately contact your local community leader and call the toll free Ebola Hotline for advice at [insert info].

Ebola treatment centres have been established in major hospitals and field centres to provide the safest possible care to persons with symptoms of Ebola.

In areas where treatment services are fully occupied or not yet established, Ebola care or referral centres are being established to help stop the spread of the disease. Ebola care or referral centres can also help communities track and monitor contacts of patients who may have also caught the disease.

It is important that you follow guidance from your local community leader, health facility or the toll free Ebola Hotline on what is the best care available to you.

Wash your hands frequently with soap and water after every social contact. If it is impossible for you to travel or contact your local health facility and you or a family member falls sick with suspected Ebola, immediately provide them with their own space. Provide them with their own plate, cup, spoon and towel. Wash these items with water and detergent or with disinfectant separately from the rest of the household.

Assign one person to take care of the individual affected. Family or community members who have fully recovered from Ebola cannot catch it again during this outbreak and can safely provide care to others who are sick.

If you provide care, you need protective equipment. Use dish gloves, or plastic bags as gloves. Use a raincoat worn backwards as an apron. Don't touch the person with Ebola or their bodily fluids without protective equipment.

Provide the sick person with plenty of drinks, such as water, soup, tea and locally available beverages. Alcohol should not be given to persons sick or suspected of Ebola infection.

Wash your hands frequently with soap and water after every contact.

Contacts - Information for those who have had close contact with a person with Ebola

If you have touched or been in close contact with someone with Ebola or attended a funeral of someone who has died of Ebola you may have been exposed to the disease.

Contacts of people with suspected Ebola are those who have:

- Slept in the same household with a person suspected of having Ebola
- Touched a person with suspected Ebola (alive or dead)
- Had sexual contact with a person with suspected Ebola
- Touched the blood or bodily fluids of a person with suspected Ebola (alive or dead)
- Touched the personal belongings of a person with suspected Ebola, including their clothes, towels and bed linen
- Breastfed by a woman with Ebola
- Breastfed or wet-nursed a baby with Ebola

If you think you have come in close contact with someone with suspected Ebola you should closely monitor yourself and your family's health and stay close to your home.

Health workers may ask you to report the status of your health or visit you every day for 21 days until they are sure you do not show signs and symptoms of Ebola.

If you think you may have been exposed to Ebola minimize close contact with other family members. Signs and symptoms for Ebola can appear 2 - 21 days after being exposed to the disease. If you have a sudden high fever report to the health facility or call the toll free Ebola Hotline on [insert info].

You cannot spread Ebola disease until symptoms like sudden high fever and

headache appear. A person who does not have physical symptoms cannot infect others.

If you or a family member falls sick with sudden high fever, immediately contact your local community leader and call the Ebola Hotline at [insert info here] for advice. Go to your nearest health facility for treatment.

Please note - Ebola can be transmitted between a baby and their mother (or wet-nursed) if one of them is infected. However, babies should continue to be exclusively breastfed until 6 months and with complimentary feeding up to two years or beyond.

Breastfeeding should only be stopped if a trained health worker determines there is a risk to continue nursing or if either mother or child shows symptoms of Ebola.

Supporting Messages

A person who has died of Ebola is still highly infectious and should not be touched. Call the toll free Ebola Hotline [insert info] to arrange for the body to be picked up or contact your local community leader.

Ebola is spread to humans from some animals like bats and monkeys. People can catch the disease touching or eating a sick or dead animal. Never eat animals that are found sick or dead. Now that Ebola is in the human population it is being spread from human to human.

Ebola can also be caught from a used razor at a barber shop, or when receiving an injection with a needle that has already been used (hospital or tattoo parlour), or if you are cut in a ceremony with a knife that has been used on someone who is infected. You cannot get Ebola by talking to people, walking in the street or shopping in the market.

If you or someone you know falls sick with sudden high fever, extreme tiredness, headache, body pain and loss of appetite, consult your local community leader and immediately call the Ebola Hotline at [insert info here] for advice.

If someone you know dies with symptoms of Ebola do not touch the body. Call immediately the toll free Ebola Hotline and consult your local community leader. Pay your respects without touching, kissing, cleaning or wrapping the body. The body can be prayed over to complete religious practices, but at a safe distance of one meter, without touching. The person's soiled clothes and bedding are contagious and must be burnt. The house, latrine and person's room must be disinfected by trained staff. Call the toll free Ebola Hotline. Children orphaned or separated from caregivers due to Ebola may be very fearful and will need care and support. If a child is orphaned or separated immediately contact a trusted child protection actor to initiate reunification with relatives or other trusted members of the community known to the child, such as neighbours or relatives.

The body of a person with Ebola should only be handled by people who are trained in safe burial practices.

REFERENCES

For more information on this topic, we recommend you read the following references.

World Health Organization (2022). **Ebola virus disease**
https://www.who.int/health-topics/ebola#tab=tab_1

World Health Organization (2021). **Ebola virus disease: factsheet**
<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/ebola-virus-disease>

HELP US KEEP THE LIBRARY UP TO DATE

If you would like to contribute to topic reviews, have found a message that needs greater clarity, or wish to create a new topic, please contact us at info@cdacnetwork.org.