

Facts on Ebola:

What is Ebola?

Ebola virus is the cause of a viral hemorrhagic fever disease. The current Ebola outbreak is most active in the West African countries of Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone.

How is it transmitted?

Ebola virus is not transmitted through the air. You cannot get the Ebola virus from food or water. Ebola is transmitted through direct contact with the blood or bodily fluids of an infected, symptomatic person or through exposure to objects (such as needles) that have been contaminated. There is no evidence that mosquitoes or other insects can transmit Ebola virus.

When is someone contagious?

To be contagious, one must have symptoms. Individuals who are not symptomatic are not contagious. In order for the virus to be transmitted, an individual must have direct contact with someone who is experiencing symptoms.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms include: fever, headache, joint and muscle aches, weakness, diarrhea, vomiting, stomach pain, lack of appetite, and abnormal bleeding. Symptoms may appear at any time during the incubation period, from two to 21 days after exposure to Ebola virus, though eight to 10 days is most common.

What is KP doing to protect staff and members?

The safety of our employees, members, and patients is our utmost concern. The comprehensive program we have in place to manage any suspected or actual Ebola cases follows four fundamental components:

- 1. Identify:** Appropriate screening of patients to identify individuals at risk for Ebola Virus Disease. All patients with fevers will be asked about recent international travel or contact with others who are ill.
- 2. Isolate:** Any patient suspected of Ebola will be placed on strict infectious disease precautions (i.e., contact and droplet precautions).
- 3. Escalate:** If a patient is suspected of Ebola Virus Disease, the necessary infectious disease clinical expertise will be called into the case immediately.
- 4. Protect:** All staff will wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), adhering to and at times exceeding Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines, when caring for suspected or confirmed Ebola patients. KP is equipped with the recommended PPE, which includes full-body Tyvek suits, head covers, face shields, and other essential equipment.

The necessary interventions and protocols required to carry out these four components are in place. They were developed using national guidelines from the CDC and a sound evaluation of the published scientific evidence on the subject. The coordination of our planning and preparedness activities is occurring through the Kaiser Permanente Emergency Management structure of clinical and administrative leaders.

You can feel confident that Kaiser Permanente is well prepared. To meet our commitment to our employees, physicians, and members, we follow all recommendations of the Centers of Disease Control and California Department of Public Health to prevent the transmission of the Ebola virus within our facilities or to health care workers, under the guidance of our expert team of infectious disease and emergency management specialists.

Thank you for the excellent work you do every day. It is through your actions that our members, patients, employees, and ultimately, the public's health, is protected.