

Ebola virus case confirmed in Congo (DRC)

August 24, 2022

In news—Recently, a new case of Ebola virus was confirmed in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

About Ebola virus-

- Ebola virus disease (EVD), formerly known as Ebola haemorrhagic fever, is a rare but severe, often fatal illness in humans.
- **Ebola virus was first discovered in 1976 near the Ebola River in what is now the Democratic Republic of Congo.**
- Since then, the virus has been infecting people from time to time, leading to outbreaks in several African countries.
- **Based on similar viruses, scientists believe EVD is animal-borne,** with bats or nonhuman primates being the most likely source.
- Infected animals carrying the virus can transmit it to other animals, like apes, monkeys, duikers and humans.
- EVD most commonly affects people and nonhuman primates (such as monkeys, gorillas, and chimpanzees).
- The average EVD case **fatality rate is around 50%.** Case fatality rates have varied from 25% to 90% in past outbreaks.
- It is caused by an infection with a group of viruses within the genus Ebolavirus, which include:
 - Ebola virus (species Zaire ebolavirus).
 - Sudan virus (species Sudan ebolavirus).
 - Taï Forest virus (species Taï Forest ebolavirus, formerly Côte d'Ivoire ebolavirus).
 - Bundibugyo virus (species Bundibugyo ebolavirus).
 - Reston virus (species Reston ebolavirus).

- Bombali virus (species Bombali ebolavirus).
- Only four (Ebola, Sudan, Tai Forest, and Bundibugyo viruses) have caused disease in people.
- The course of the illness typically progresses from “dry” symptoms initially (such as fever, aches and pains, and fatigue), and then progresses to “wet” symptoms (such as diarrhea and vomiting) as the person becomes sicker.
- **Scientists think people are initially infected with Ebola virus through contact with an infected animal,** such as a fruit bat or nonhuman primate. This is called a spillover event.
- After that, the virus **spreads from person to person,** potentially affecting a large number of people.
- **The virus spreads through direct contact** (such as through broken skin or mucous membranes in the eyes, nose, or mouth) with:
 - Blood or body fluids (urine, saliva, sweat, feces, vomit, breast milk, amniotic fluid, and semen) of a person who is sick with or has died from Ebola virus disease (EVD).
 - Objects (such as clothes, bedding, needles, and medical equipment) contaminated with body fluids from a person who is sick with or has died from EVD.
 - Infected fruit bats or nonhuman primates (such as apes and monkeys).
 - Semen from a man who recovered from EVD (through oral, vaginal, or anal sex). The virus can remain in certain body fluids (including semen) of a patient who has recovered from EVD, even if they no longer have symptoms of severe illness.
 - People remain infectious as long as their blood contains the virus.
 - When people become infected with Ebola, they do not start developing signs or symptoms right away.

This period between exposure to an illness and having symptoms is known as the **incubation period**.

- **A person can only spread Ebola to other people after they develop signs and symptoms of Ebola.**

Major symptoms of EVD include:

- Fever.
- Aches and pains, such as severe headache and muscle and joint pain.
- Weakness and fatigue.
- Sore throat.
- Loss of appetite.
- Gastrointestinal symptoms including abdominal pain, diarrhea, and vomiting.
- Unexplained hemorrhaging, bleeding or bruising.
- Other symptoms may include red eyes, skin rash, and hiccups (late-stage).