Ebola Hemorrhagic Fever

Ebola Hemorrhagic Fever is one of the deadliest of a group of diseases called viral hemorrhagic fevers. Like humans, monkeys, gorillas, and chimpanzees can get infection and might serve as a source of virus if infected. So far, almost all outbreaks have occurred in Central Africa.

CAUSES

- One of several virus germs that are called Ebola viruses.
- Although not known for sure, it is thought that the germ can be passed to humans from animals that have the virus. It can then be passed from human to human. It is passed by:
  - Contact with body fluids (feces, urine, blood, and maybe sweat).
  - Infected needles.
- Spread mainly by close person-to-person contact with severely ill patients. This happens most often to hospital-care workers and family members who care for someone with infection with the Ebola germ. Close personal contact with persons who are infected but show no signs of active disease are not likely to cause a problem.
- Ebola virus can be spread from person-to-person through sexual contact. Persons who have recovered an Ebola virus infection can still have the virus in their genital secretions. During this time, the germ can spread through sexual activity.

SYMPTOMS

- Early symptoms:
  - Joint pain.
  - Fever.
  - Backache (*low*).
  - Loose stools (*diarrhea*).
  - Being very tired (*fatigue*).
  - Weakness
  - Headache.
  - Lasting discomfort or feeling ill (*malaise*).
  - Feeling sick to your stomach (*nausea*).
  - Sore throat.
  - Vomiting.
- Late symptoms:
  - Bleeding from eyes, ears, nose, mouth, and rectum.
  - Feeling down (*depression*).
  - Eye swelling and redness (*inflammation*).
  - High fever.
  - Genital swelling.
  - Lasting feeling of pain in skin.
  - Rash on whole body. The rash often has blood.
  - Top of the mouth looks red.
  - Uncontrolled shaking (*seizures*), coma.

DIAGNOSIS

The most important part of diagnosis is suspecting that Ebola may be the problem. After, many blood tests can be used by the caregiver to confirm the diagnosis.

TREATMENT

People with Ebola should be treated in a hospital where they can be isolated from other patients. There is no specific treatment and no known cure at this time. Patients with Ebola are given treatments that help with fluids, oxygen, and blood. If other types of infection develop, then appropriate medicines are given.

PREVENTION

- Avoid places where there is known disease. Under normal circumstances, travelers are at low risk of getting the disease. To eliminate the risk, travelers should avoid areas where Ebola outbreaks are happening.
- Wear protective clothing around sick people. This includes using gloves, masks, protective gowns, and goggles.

- Do not re-use needles.

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