

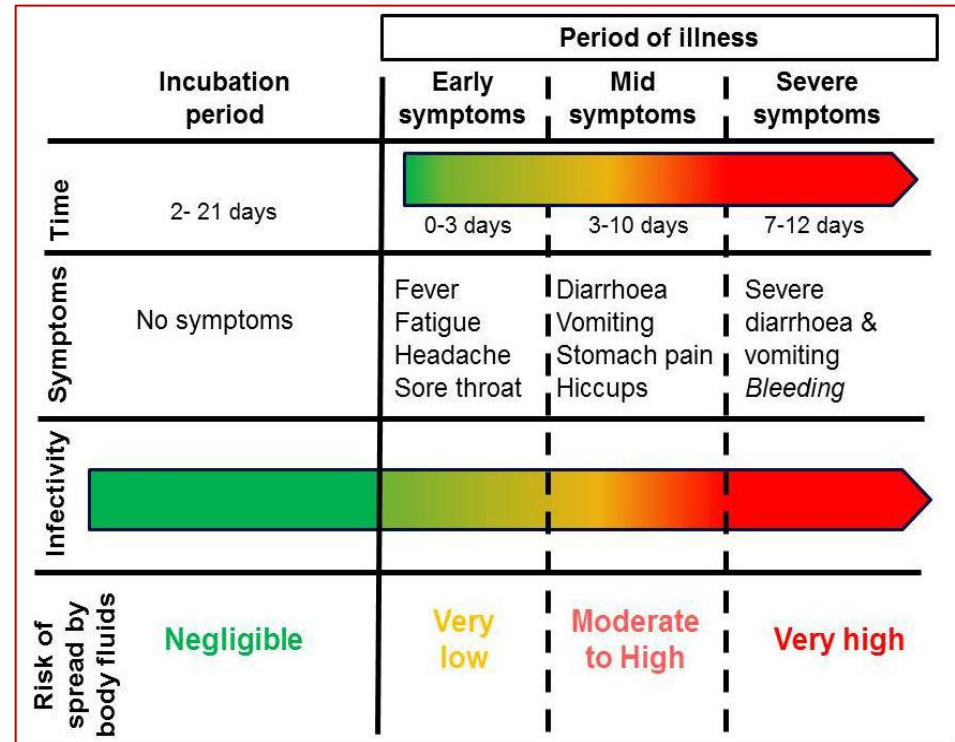


Ebola and infectivity

Protecting and improving the nation's health

- Ebola virus is spread among people through close and direct physical contact with infected body fluids
- people infected with Ebola can only spread the virus to other people once they have developed symptoms. In the early stages, these include fever, headache, joint and muscle pain, sore throat, and intense muscle weakness
- Ebola virus is not spread through routine, social contact (such as shaking hands or sitting next to someone) with people who do not have visible symptoms
- when people have no or very mild symptoms (just a low fever), the level of virus is very low and unlikely to pose a risk to others
- once people are unwell, then all body fluids (such as blood, urine, faeces, vomit, saliva and semen) are infectious, with blood, faeces and vomit being the most infectious
- when someone reaches the point at which they are most infectious, they are unlikely to be in any condition to move or interact socially. The most risk is to people involved in their care and not the general public
- skin is almost certainly contaminated in late stage disease because of the impossibility of maintaining good hygiene, but other people are not at risk unless they are directly involved in caring for a person with advanced disease and without wearing personal protective equipment
- semen can remain infectious for at least three months after recovery

The diagram below shows how a person with Ebola becomes more infectious over time.



PHE publications gateway number: 2014506

Published (v2): 1 May 2015

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