



Marburg virus disease: information sheet for category 1 contacts

You have been given this information sheet because you have been in possible contact with Marburg virus. As your exposure has been assessed as very low risk, it is very unlikely that you have caught Marburg virus disease, and you can continue your usual activities. However, as a precaution, if you feel unwell with a fever (temperature of 37.5°C or higher) or other symptoms suggestive of Marburg virus disease within 21 days of your last possible exposure to Marburg virus, call NHS 111 and tell them that you have been in possible contact with Marburg virus.

About Marburg virus disease

Marburg virus disease is a rare but serious disease caused by Marburg virus. Outbreaks and sporadic cases of Marburg virus disease have previously been reported in Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Kenya, Ghana, Guinea, Uganda, South Africa, Rwanda and Tanzania.

How Marburg virus spreads

Marburg virus can spread by:

- direct contact with the organs, blood, secretions, or other bodily fluids of an infected person (including sexual transmission)
- contact with objects, such as needles or soiled clothing, that have been contaminated with infected secretions
- contact with an infected animal, such as chimpanzees, gorillas or fruit bats, either if they are found ill or dead, or collected as bushmeat

Marburg virus is not spread through routine, social contact (such as shaking hands or sitting next to someone) with people who do not have symptoms. There is no evidence that Marburg virus can spread through the air.

It can take up to 21 days from when someone is exposed to the virus for symptoms to appear.

Symptoms of Marburg virus disease

The onset of illness is sudden, with:

- high fever
- severe headache
- intense weakness

By about the third day, symptoms include:

- severe watery diarrhoea
- abdominal pain
- abdominal cramping
- nausea
- vomiting

Some patients with severe illness may develop internal and external bleeding.

Marburg virus disease is fatal in between 24% to 88% of all cases, depending on the virus strain, the person's age, and other factors including whether the person has a weakened immune system. Starting supportive treatment promptly after symptoms begin can improve the likelihood of surviving the disease.

Preventing and treating Marburg virus disease

There is currently no licensed vaccine for Marburg virus. To avoid Marburg virus spreading between people, those caring for individuals with possible or suspected Marburg virus disease should avoid contact with the patient's bodily fluids and should wear personal protective equipment (PPE).

Treatment for Marburg virus disease is with supportive care, including balancing fluids and electrolytes, maintaining a person's oxygen status and blood pressure, and treating any co-infections. Supportive care improves survival, particularly if started early.

Your risk of developing Marburg virus disease

You are not considered to be at risk of having caught Marburg virus disease. This is because although you have had contact with someone known to have Marburg virus disease, their bodily fluids, or potentially infectious materials, you have reported that **you have not**:

- been in **close (less than 2 metres) or direct contact** with someone known to have Marburg virus disease **without** appropriate PPE, while they had symptoms
- been in **direct contact** with the body fluids (or items contaminated with body fluids, such as bedding) from someone known to have Marburg virus disease while they had symptoms, **without** appropriate PPE
- been in **direct contact** with the body of someone who died who was known to have Marburg virus disease, **without** appropriate PPE

Your family and household contacts are not at risk of catching Marburg virus from you. There are no restrictions on your activities, and there are no monitoring or reporting requirements.

What to do if you become ill

It is extremely unlikely that you have caught Marburg virus. However, if you feel unwell with any of the symptoms of Marburg virus disease as listed above within 21 days of your possible contact with Marburg virus, **stay at home**. Take your temperature if you have a thermometer available. It is important to take your temperature before you take any medicines such as paracetamol, ibuprofen or aspirin, as these can reduce your temperature.

After taking your temperature, call NHS 111 and tell them that you have had possible contact with Marburg virus. Let them know if your temperature is 37.5°C or higher. They will arrange for you to be assessed by an appropriate clinician.

In an emergency, you should call 999 and tell them about your symptoms and that you have had possible contact with Marburg virus.

Further information

More information about Marburg virus disease can be found on the following websites:

UK Health Security Agency: www.gov.uk/guidance/marburg-virus-disease-origins-reservoirs-transmission-and-guidelines

World Health Organization information on Marburg: www.who.int/health-topics/marburg-virus-disease