

Marburg Virus Disease

What is Marburg Virus Disease?

Marburg Virus Disease (MVD) is a viral hemorrhagic fever that is a part of the same family as Ebola viruses. MVD is a severe, often deadly disease that affects both humans and non-human primates (such as monkeys, gorillas, and chimpanzees). The disease is found throughout sub-Saharan Africa and has appeared in sporadic outbreaks since its discovery. Marburg was first recognized in 1967, when simultaneous outbreaks occurred in Marburg and Frankfurt, Germany and in Belgrade, Yugoslavia (now Serbia).

How is MVD spread?

The reservoir for Marburg is the Egyptian rousette bat (*Rousettus aegyptiacus*), a type of fruit bat native to Africa. It is unknown how Marburg virus first spread from animal to human, but two previous cases have shown exposure to infected bat feces or aerosols as the likely routes of infection. Once a human becomes infected, transmission can occur to others through direct contact with the blood or secretions of an infected person or with objects contaminated with the infected secretions. The spread of MVD between people has occurred in close environments and among direct contacts. This makes family members, friends, caregivers, and other close contacts the most at risk to get MVD.

What are the symptoms of MVD?

Symptoms for MVD can appear after a period of 2-21 days. After this time period, symptoms begin abruptly with fever, chills, headache, and muscle aches and pain. After three days, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, chest pain, diarrhea, and a sore throat may appear. Around the fifth day after the beginning of symptoms, a maculopapular rash (discolored skin with raised bumps) generally around the trunk (chest, back, stomach), may occur. Over time, symptoms become increasingly severe and can include severe weight loss, shock, delirium, liver failure and inflammation of the pancreas.

Are persons in the United States at risk?

In the previous outbreaks of Marburg, only one US traveler was diagnosed MVD. Although there is potential for more cases, the general public is not at risk. Only those with direct contact with someone who has Marburg, or with that person's contaminated surroundings are at risk. Those with close contact with someone with Marburg must take steps to protect themselves from contact with blood or bodily fluids.

What can travelers do to prevent Marburg?

Check the CDC traveler's health website at <http://www.cdc.gov/travel> for warnings and advisories prior to travel to learn what is currently occurring in the area you plan to visit. Practice careful hygiene. Avoid contact with blood and secretions of ill people. Do not handle items that may have touched another person's blood or secretions. Avoid funeral or burial rituals that involve handling the body of someone who died from suspected or confirmed Marburg. Avoid contact with fruit bats and non-human primates and any secretions or raw meat. Avoid areas known to be inhabited by fruit bats (such as mines and caves).

What if I become ill after traveling to a country where Ebola has been spreading?

People who have travelled to a country where Marburg is being spread should seek medical care immediately if they develop fever, chills, headache, muscle pain, diarrhea, vomiting, rash, stomach pain, or red eyes within 21 days of traveling. Inform the first healthcare provider you see that you recently traveled to an area where Marburg is being spread.