



Government of Sierra Leone
Ministry of Health and Sanitation
EVD Risk Communication and Social Mobilization Pillar

Ebola Virus Disease Key Messages

24th February 2021

Status of Ebola Outbreak in Guinea

- Ebola is not in Sierra Leone at this time.
- There are confirmed Ebola cases in Guinea. The cases are in the N'Zérékoré region in South-east Guinea. This area is close to the borders with Liberia and Cote d'Ivoire.
- As cases continue in Guinea, we need to stay prepared to protect Sierra Leone from Ebola.
- Many of us have friends and family across the border. Ebola knows no borders – the problem of one is the problem of all.
- Sierra Leone and Guinea are united in the fight against Ebola. The governments of Sierra Leone and Guinea are working together to protect the people who call these countries home.

Immediate Steps the Government is Taking to Protect Sierra Leone

- The best way to keep Mama Salone safe from Ebola is for us to be prepared and watching for Ebola. That way, if Ebola enters Sierra Leone, we can act fast to stop it right away.
- We are watching the situation in Guinea closely while taking early action in Sierra Leone to be prepared and ready for responding to any cases.
- The government is communicating regularly with Guinea and Liberia to share information for better coordination.
- District teams have gone into action to work with communities, stakeholders, and hospitals to prepare and watch for persons with signs and symptoms of Ebola and to sensitize communities.
- Trained border staff at the main, official crossing points into Sierra Leone screen travelers for Ebola and coronavirus.
- The Sierra Leone government is engaging international partners to get Ebola vaccine as part of its prevention efforts.

What You Can Do to Prepare and Protect Yourself, Your Family, and Mama Salone

- Plan ahead and take action now. It is the best way to protect your loved ones and stop Ebola from harming your community.
- Make sure you always have soap and water to wash your hands.
 - Washing your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds is an effective way to kill germs. You can also use hand sanitizer to clean hands.
- Know the early symptoms of Ebola – fever, weakness, diarrhea, headache and body

ache.

- Early symptoms of Ebola are similar to symptoms of other sicknesses like malaria.
- Be prepared to go to the nearest hospital or call 117 right away if someone in your family gets sick with fever plus any other symptoms of Ebola.
- One of the key ways that we can watch for Ebola is by reporting all deaths.
 - When a loved one dies, their death must be reported by calling 117. Reporting the death is a way to show respect for the person who has died while keeping yourself and your family safe.
- Advocate for safe and dignified burials.
 - If someone dies in the home, make sure no one touches the body. Call 117.
 - Encourage your loved ones to do the same any time someone dies.
 - The Ebola outbreak before taught us that washing bodies can be dangerous and is strongly discouraged. By not washing bodies, we are protecting ourselves, our families, and our communities.
- If someone you know is afraid that they have Ebola, do not help them hide.
 - Help them do what is best for them, best for their family, and best for Mama Salone. Call 117 right away to make sure they get the proper care.
- If you have any questions or want to know more information about Ebola, call 117 free on any network.

What is Ebola and Where Does It Come From

- Ebola virus disease is a serious sickness that can be deadly without early treatment.
- Ebola enters the human population when a person touches the body fluids of an animal that has the virus. This can sometimes happen when hunting, trading, butchering, preparing, or cooking an animal.
- Once Ebola has spread from an animal to a person, it can spread from person to person very quickly.
- A person can only spread Ebola when they begin to have one or more symptoms of the sickness.

How Ebola is Spread

- Ebola mainly spreads from one person to another through touching a sick person's body fluids.
- Body fluids include blood, wet, toilet, vomit, spit, sweat, breast milk, and semen.
- People can also get Ebola from touching objects that have been touched with body fluids from a sick person such as needles, syringes, clothing, and bedding.

Early Symptoms and Early Treatment

- The first Ebola symptoms are fever, weakness, diarrhea, headache, and body ache. These are very similar to malaria symptoms.
 - If you have fever plus any of these symptoms, go to the nearest hospital or call 117 right away.
- Early treatment is the best chance of survival, and protects your family, friends, and community.

- If you wait until later symptoms like vomiting, bleeding, or hiccups appear, you are lowering your chances of survival and you risk spreading the sickness to your family and loved ones.
- Protect yourself and stay safe while you wait. Do not touch the sick person, their body fluids, or anything they touched.
- Encourage the sick person to drink plenty of Oral Rehydration Solution (ORS), water or other liquids.

Key Differences between Ebola and Coronavirus

- Ebola and coronavirus are different from one another in when and how they spread from person to person.

When a person can spread each virus

- A person can only spread Ebola when they begin to have one or more symptoms of the sickness.
- With coronavirus, some people who get coronavirus do not have symptoms, but both people with and without symptoms can spread the virus to others.

- **How** a person spreads each virus

- Ebola mainly spreads from person to person by touching a sick person's body fluids or objects their body fluids have touched. It requires direct touching of the sick person or their things.
- Coronavirus mainly spreads from person to person when someone with the virus breathes it out and someone near them breathes it in. No touching is needed to spread the virus. This is why face masks are so important for stopping the spread of coronavirus.

Sharing Information Responsibly

- Knowledge is power, but when information shared is not based on facts and evidence, it can spread rumors and cause fear, panic and even harm.
- Pause and think twice before sharing messages on WhatsApp and social media. It is important we always make sure information is from a trusted source before sharing.
 - Key trusted sources include the Government of Sierra Leone, World Health Organization (WHO), and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).
 - It is good to cross-check with the website of the source to make sure what is being shared is actually true.
- You can help your friends and family stay healthy and prevent Ebola by sharing messages and information put out by the Government of Sierra Leone.
- If you are not sure if something is true or you want to know more information about Ebola or coronavirus, call 117 free on any network.