



Global Alert and Response (GAR)

Information note: Ebola and Food Safety

24 August 2014

Ebola: general information

- Currently an outbreak of Ebola virus disease (EVD) is ongoing in several African countries. Ebola virus disease is a severe illness.
- The infection is transmitted by direct contact with the blood, body fluids and tissues of infected animals or people.
- During an outbreak, those at higher risk of infection are health workers, family members and others in close contact with sick people and deceased patients.
- Appropriate infection and prevention control measures can be implemented to stop transmission and supportive care to patients help to considerably reduce the mortality. Spread of the infection can be controlled through the use of recommended protective measures in clinics and hospitals, at community gatherings, during burial ceremonies or at home.

Current outbreak: a human to human transmission

- Ebola viruses are known to cause epidemics of disease among wild animals, particularly non-human primates.
- Potential hosts of Ebola viruses are non-human primates, duikers, bats, small rodents, and shrews.
- The initial source of past EVD outbreaks was likely human contact with wild animals through hunting, butchering and preparing meat from infected wild animals ("bush meat"), with subsequent transmission from human to human.
- However, in the current outbreak, the majority of cases are a result of human to human transmission.

Food, Animals and Ebola

- If food products are properly prepared and cooked, humans cannot become infected by consuming them: the Ebola virus is inactivated through cooking.
- Basic hygiene measures can prevent infection in people in direct contact with infected animals or with raw meat and by-products.
- Basic hygiene measures include regular hand washing and changing of clothes and boots before and after touching these animals and their products.
- However, sick and diseased animal should never be consumed.

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