Transmission

- Via blood, stools, vomit, urine, saliva/spit, sweat, tears, breastmilk or semen of a person sick with Ebola that enters the mouth, nose, eyes or a skin cut of another person
- Can also be spread when handling the body of someone who has died from Ebola
- Contact with objects (for example, bedding, clothes or needles) that have been contaminated with body fluids from a person who is sick or has died from Ebola
- During unprotected sex with a man who has recovered from Ebola (for 12 months after he has recovered)
- Touching infected fruit bats or their faeces or waste, and touching or eating infected bush meat (bats, monkeys, apes) that is not well cooked

Symptoms

- Starts with sudden fever, tiredness, muscle pain, headache and sore throat.
- Usually followed by vomiting, diarrhoea and rash. Sometimes people can bleed under the skin or from the nose and gums (inside mouth), or cough blood or have bloody stools (faeces).
- A very severe and deadly disease that can kill around half or more of the people infected.

Prevention

- Ebola is very serious but can be prevented
- Avoid touching sick or dead fruit bats, monkeys or apes or their faeces or waste
- Do not eat bushmeat or animal products (blood and meat) unless they have been thoroughly cooked
- Use personal protective equipment (gloves, masks, clothing) when taking care of sick people
- Disinfect the homes and personal belongings of people who are sick or have died from Ebola
- Wash hands with soap
- Ensure safe and dignified burials
- Promote social distancing
- Isolate sick people
- Dispose safely of waste that might be contaminated (by burning or burying it)
- Disinfect reusable supplies
- Provide psychosocial support
- Male survivors of Ebola must practise safe sex for 12 months from onset of symptoms or until their semen tests negative twice for Ebola virus

Vulnerable people

- Every person in the community is vulnerable to Ebola
- Family and relatives of people who are sick (or who have died) from Ebola, health workers, volunteers, and people who handle dead bodies, are most at risk
If an epidemic occurs

- Identify suspected Ebola cases rapidly and refer them to care and treatment centres
- Provide safe transport for suspected Ebola cases
- Trace contacts and follow them up
- Use personal protective equipment (gloves, masks, clothing) when caring for sick people
- Isolate sick people
- Promote social distancing
- Wash hands in communities and health centres with soap, chlorine solution or hand-sanitizer
- Provide safe and dignified burials
- Disinfect the homes and personal belongings of people who are sick or have died from Ebola
- Dispose safely of waste that might be contaminated (by burning or burying)
- Disinfect reusable supplies
- Male survivors of Ebola must practise safe sex for 12 months from onset of symptoms or until their semen tests negative twice for Ebola virus
- Provide psychosocial support
- Involve the community in managing rumours and misinformation

Community-based assessment - questions

Make a map of the community and mark the information you gather on the map. Record other details.

- When did people start to fall sick with Ebola?
- How many people have fallen sick with Ebola? Where?
- How many have died? Where?
- Who and where are the vulnerable people?
- How many people live in the affected community or area? How many children under five years of age live in the area?
- How many pregnant women live in the affected communities?
- Where are the local health facilities and services? (Include traditional and community carers.)
- What are the community’s habits, practices and beliefs about caring for and feeding sick people?
- What are the community’s burial traditions, funeral procedures and practices?
- Is a social mobilization or health promotion programme in place?
- Which sources of information do people use most?
- Are rumours or is misinformation about Ebola spreading in the community?
- Are health workers, volunteers or people who have survived Ebola stigmatized, left out, threatened or harassed? What are the main effects on them and their lives?
- Do people in the community know about Ebola?
- Do people in the community know the main signs of Ebola and what to do if someone becomes sick (phone number to call, actions to take)?
- Do people in the community know how to protect themselves from Ebola?
- Are people in the community taking social distancing seriously? Why? Why not?

Volunteer actions
See the following action tools for more information on what actions to take against ebola virus disease:
1 - Community-based surveillance
2 - Community mapping
3 - Communicating with the community
4 - Referral to health facilities
5 - Volunteer protection and safety
6 - Using personal protection equipment (PPE) for highly infectious diseases
19 - Psychosocial support (Psychological first aid (PFA))
20 - Isolating sick people
21 - Safe and dignified burials
25 - Mass vaccination campaigns
34 - Handwashing with soap
35 - Handwashing in a highly infectious epidemic
39 - Preparing and using disinfectants
40 - Building an incinerator for medical waste
41 - Handling and slaughtering animals
42 - Promoting safe sex
43 - Social mobilization and behaviour change