

# FACT SHEET: Marburg

October 2024

## WHAT IS MARBURG?

Marburg virus disease (Marburg) is a rare and often fatal disease caused by infection with one of two zoonotic viruses, Marburg virus or Ravn virus, both members of the Filoviridae virus family, which includes Ebola viruses. Egyptian rousette bats are the reservoir host for Marburg virus, and spillover can occur in people with prolonged exposure to mines or caves inhabited by these bats. Since its discovery in 1967, outbreaks of the Marburg virus have occurred in Germany, Serbia, Tanzania, Equatorial Guinea, and several other countries in Sub-Saharan Africa.

## WHO CAN GET MARBURG?

Anyone. However, healthcare workers, family, and friends providing care for Marburg patients and people in contact with infected animals or bats are at highest risk for becoming infected.

## WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF MARBURG?

Symptoms of Marburg include fever, severe headache, body aches, sore throat, abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, multi-organ dysfunction, blood in vomit and feces, and bleeding from the nose, gums, and vagina.

## HOW SOON DO SYMPTOMS APPEAR?

Symptoms generally begin anywhere from 2–21 days after exposure.

## HOW IS MARBURG SPREAD?

Marburg virus is transmitted between people through direct contact (via broken skin or mucous membranes in the eyes, nose, or mouth) with the body fluids (blood, urine, saliva, sweat, feces, vomit, breast milk, amniotic fluid, or semen) of an infected person or someone who recently died from Marburg. The virus can also spread through direct contact with materials or surfaces contaminated with these body fluids. Marburg virus is **not** spread through airborne transmission. A person infected with Marburg can only spread the virus to others once symptoms begin.

## HOW IS MARBURG TREATED AND IS THERE A VACCINE?

Currently, there is no Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-approved vaccine or treatment for Marburg. 23 to 90 percent of infected people will die around 8 to 9 days after symptom onset, depending on the virus strain and level of clinical care. Intensive supportive care and fluid replacement can lower mortality rates.

## HOW CAN PEOPLE PROTECT THEMSELVES AGAINST MARBURG?

People who travel to or are in an area affected by a Marburg outbreak should:

- Wash hands frequently with soap and water, scrubbing for at least 20 seconds.
- Not handle items that may have come into contact with an infected person's body fluids (such as clothes and bedding).
- Avoid funeral or burial rituals that require handling the body of someone who has died from Marburg.
- Avoid treatment facilities for Marburg patients.
- Avoid contact with bats and nonhuman primates or blood, fluids, and raw meat prepared from these animals.
- Avoid entering areas known to be inhabited by cave-dwelling Egyptian rousette bats, such as mines or caves.
- Monitor their health for 21 days after travel and seek medical care immediately if symptoms develop.

Healthcare workers who may be exposed to patients with Marburg should wear appropriate personal protective equipment and practice proper infection control measures.

## WANT MORE INFORMATION?

Information about Marburg and other related health topics can be found at [cdc.com](https://www.cdc.com). The DC Department of Health promotes the health and safety of the District residents. For additional information, please visit [dchealth.dc.gov](https://dchealth.dc.gov) or call (202) 442-5955.