

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

BUNDIBUGYO VIRUS DISEASE (BVD)



01 What makes the Bundibugyo Virus Disease (BVD) different from other Ebola Virus Diseases (EVD) previously experienced in Africa?

Bundibugyo Virus Disease is unique because it is a genetically different species of the Ebola Virus Disease Family. Compared to the more common Ebola Zaire strain, it has historically shown a lower death rate and may present slightly milder outcomes in some outbreaks.

Another key difference is that vaccines and treatments developed for the Zaire strain may not provide the same level of protection against Bundibugyo virus disease, which makes outbreak response and research more challenging.

However, it still spreads in the same way and remains a serious public health threat

02 How can someone get infected with Bundibugyo Virus Disease (BVD)?

Bundibugyo Virus Disease spreads through direct contact with the bodily fluids of an infected person. This includes:

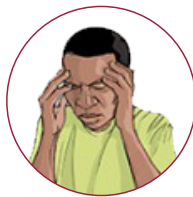
- » Blood, vomit, urine, stool, saliva, or sweat of a sick person
- » Contact with objects (like clothes, bedding, needles) contaminated with these fluids
- » Caring for someone who is sick without proper protection
- » Safe burial practices not being followed when handling a body of someone who died from the disease

It does not spread through air, water, or food that is properly cooked and handled.

People are most at risk when they care for sick relatives, attend funerals without protection, or handle infected animals or materials.

03

What are the signs and symptoms of the Bundibugyo Virus Disease?



01

Sudden fever

02

Severe headache

03

Muscle and body pain

04

Fatigue and weakness

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Sore throat

06

Vomiting and diarrhea

07

Stomach pain

08

Loss of appetite

09

In some cases, unexplained bleeding or bruising

Symptoms can appear suddenly and may worsen quickly.

Remember: If you or a relative experience these symptoms, seek medical care immediately and report early to help protect yourself, your family, and your community.

04

How can animals become infected with Bundibugyo Virus Disease, and what signs should I look out for?

Animals can become infected through contact with infected animals (alive or dead), exposure to contaminated body fluids, or contact with contaminated environments.

- » Possible signs to watch for may include:
- » Weakness or unusual tiredness
- » Loss of appetite
- » Fever
- » Reduced activity or unusual behavior
- » Unexplained illness or sudden death

If you notice sick or dead animals, avoid touching, handling, or consuming them.

Report immediately to veterinary services, local authorities, or designated animal health officers.

05

As a community member, what preventive measures should I take to reduce the risk of Bundibugyo Virus Disease transmission?

You can help prevent the disease by:

- » Avoiding direct contact with sick individuals' body fluids

- » Washing hands regularly with soap and clean water or alcohol-based sanitizer
- » Reporting persons presenting symptoms of Bundibugyo Virus Disease early
- » Avoiding handling dead bodies without trained burial teams
- » Avoiding contact with dead animals or bushmeat from unsafe sources
- » Supporting survivors and affected families without stigma
- » Allowing trained burial teams to conduct safe and dignified burials to help protect you, your family, and your community from the spread of Bundibugyo Virus Disease.
- » Avoiding large social gatherings.
- » Report sick or dead animals immediately to veterinary services.

06

As a healthcare worker, what preventive measures should I take to reduce the risk of Bundibugyo Virus Disease transmission?

You should:

- » Use appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE)
- » Practice strict infection prevention and control measures
- » Isolate persons presenting symptoms of Bundibugyo Virus Disease quickly.
- » Follow safe waste disposal and disinfection procedures
- » Report persons presenting symptoms of Bundibugyo Virus Disease immediately through official channels

Reminder: Training, proper equipment, and community trust are essential to protecting frontline workers and stopping transmission.

07

As a community member, can I rely on Community Health Workers to diagnose or treat Bundibugyo Virus Disease?

While community health workers are essential, they do not diagnose Bundibugyo Virus Disease or provide treatment for it.

Their role is to:

- » Identify possible symptoms early
- » Educate and raise awareness in communities
- » Refer persons presenting symptoms of Bundibugyo Virus Disease immediately to health facilities or response teams
- » Support monitoring and follow-up under the guidance of health authorities

Only trained healthcare workers and designated treatment units can confirm and care for people infected with Bundibugyo Virus Disease.



08

What should I do if I receive false information or rumors about Bundibugyo Virus Disease?

Please do the following:

- » Verify information through trusted health authorities
- » Avoid sharing unverified social media messages
- » Report harmful rumors to local response teams.

Remember:

Misinformation can increase fear, panic, stigma, and the spread of disease, sharing false information can put you and others at risk.

09

Why is there no approved vaccine specifically for the Bundibugyo strain, and does this mean Ebola vaccines do not exist?

Ebola vaccines do exist and have already been successfully used to control outbreaks caused by the Zaire Ebola strain, particularly in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

However, there are several species of Ebola virus including Zaire, Sudan, and Bundibugyo.

The Bundibugyo strain has caused relatively few outbreaks compared to the Zaire strain.

Currently scientists are reviewing the evidence on whether vaccines developed for one strain may provide strong enough protection against another.

Researchers are working hard to develop vaccines that specifically target the Bundibugyo strain and other Ebola strains.

Research is also ongoing to develop broader vaccines that can protect against multiple Ebola species.

10

Why were some illnesses and deaths reported before the Bundibugyo Virus Disease outbreak was officially announced, and does this mean information was hidden?

Reporting suspected illnesses or deaths before an official outbreak declaration is normal practice. Health authorities first investigate unusual illnesses, collect samples, and carry out laboratory testing to confirm the exact disease before officially announcing an outbreak.

In this outbreak, confirming the disease was more difficult because the rapid Ebola tests commonly used in many countries are mainly designed to detect the Zaire Ebola strain and could not easily identify the Bundibugyo virus. Scientists at the National Institute of Biomedical Research (INRB) in the DRC therefore had to use additional laboratory methods and advanced testing to confirm the Bundibugyo ebolavirus.

The official declaration was made after scientific confirmation and careful risk assessment, not because information was being concealed.

11 Now that travel restrictions have been imposed during the Bundibugyo Virus Disease outbreak, how can communities respond calmly and prepare effectively without panic?

Travel and movement measures may be put in place to help reduce the spread of disease while health teams work to control the outbreak. Communities are encouraged to stay calm, follow information from trusted health authorities, and avoid rumors or misinformation that can create fear and stigma.

People can help protect themselves and others by reporting symptoms early, cooperating with health workers, washing hands regularly with running water and soap or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer, avoiding contact with the bodily fluids of sick people, and following safe burial practices. Getting care early can improve survival and help stop the spread of the disease.

12 What immediate actions should I take if I suspect symptoms or exposure, and where can I seek help?

If you develop symptoms such as fever, vomiting, diarrhea, weakness, or unexplained bleeding after possible exposure:

These are some Immediate actions you should take:

- » Avoid close physical contact with others
- » Not self-medicate or rely on rumors
- » Contact health authorities immediately
- » Go to the nearest designated health facility or Ebola treatment center
- » Inform healthcare workers about recent travel, contact with sick persons, or attendance at funerals

13 Where do I seek help?

You should seek assistance from:

- » Local health facilities
- » Emergency public health hotlines
- » Community health workers
- » Ministry of Health response teams

14 I have a relative in the treatment center. What is happening there, and should I trust the care?

Yes. In the treatment center, patients are cared for by trained health workers and specialists who provide safe and compassionate treatment. Patients receive medical care, nutritious food, emotional and psychosocial support, and close monitoring to help them recover safely and protect others from infection.

Treatment centers also support patients' mental well-being by helping them stay connected with their families through phone calls or other safe communication methods arranged by the health team.

Families may also receive guidance and psychosocial support to help them cope with stress, fear, or anxiety during this difficult time.



15

What are safe and dignified burials and why are they important? Why can't we bury a relative who died from Bundibugyo Virus Disease ourselves?

Safe and dignified burials are ways of burying someone who died from a dangerous infectious disease, where trained health workers safely handle the body while respecting the family's cultural and religious values.

They are important because the virus can still spread from the body after death. These burials help protect families and the community from getting infected, while still allowing a respectful and dignified farewell.

We should not bury a relative who died from Bundibugyo Virus Disease ourselves because the body may still be infectious. Direct contact can expose family members and others to the virus and lead to new infections.



16

How can families and communities support people affected by the Bundibugyo Virus Disease emotionally?

Families and communities can help people affected by the Bundibugyo Virus Disease by listening calmly, showing compassion, and avoiding stigma or discrimination against patients, survivors, and their families. Children, caregivers, and grieving families may need extra emotional support and reassurance.

17

How can I play a key role in the response against the Bundibugyo Virus Disease?

- » Rely on verified information from health authorities, not rumors
- » Encourage people to seek care early when developing symptoms
- » Stay calm and avoid panic, even when measures like quarantine are in place
- » Show solidarity and support for affected individuals and communities, without stigma
- » Follow public health guidance strictly to protect yourself and others
- » Refer those with severe distress or trauma to available mental health and psychosocial support services
- » Share facts, not fear, to help stop the spread of misinformation and rumours

18

Can Bundibugyo Virus Disease survivors safely return to their communities?

Yes.

People who recover from Bundibugyo Virus Disease and are discharged by health authorities do not pose a risk through normal social interaction.

As community members, we should:

- » Welcome and support Bundibugyo Virus Disease survivors back into their communities
- » Avoid stigma, rejection, or discrimination
- » Encourage and support them to continue any follow-up care and medical guidance provided by health teams

Community support is important for recovery and healing.

Please keep in mind:

The Bundibugyo Virus Disease can be controlled. Africa has strong experience responding to Ebola and other outbreaks. Let us follow trusted health advice, report symptoms early, practice prevention measures, and support affected families with care and compassion instead of spreading fear and stigma.

Community solidarity, kindness, and dignity are essential to overcoming the outbreak together.