

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) about Marburg for volunteers

### **Q: What is Marburg virus?**

**A:** Marburg virus is a highly contagious virus that causes Marburg Virus Disease (MVD), a severe haemorrhagic fever similar to Ebola. It belongs to the same family as Ebola, the Filoviridae family, and is transmitted to humans from fruit bats and spreads among humans through direct contact with the body fluids of infected individuals, including the deceased.

### **Q: What are the signs and symptoms of Marburg?**

**A:** Symptoms typically begin suddenly with fever, chills, headache, and muscle aches. Later stages may include severe bleeding (haemorrhaging), vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, sore throat, and rash. In severe cases, organ failure and death may occur.

### **Q: How is Marburg spread?**

**A:** Marburg is spread through direct contact with bodily fluids (blood, saliva, sweat, semen, vomit, urine, faeces) of an infected person or with the body of a deceased person. It can also be spread by contact with contaminated surfaces or materials, such as bedding and clothing.

### **Q: How is Marburg diagnosed?**

**A:** Marburg is diagnosed through laboratory testing, typically done in specialized labs. Blood samples or oral swabs are taken to detect the virus or antibodies associated with the infection. Early diagnosis is crucial to preventing further spread. Without a test, it can be difficult to clinically distinguish MVD from other infectious diseases such as malaria, typhoid fever, shigellosis, meningitis and other viral haemorrhagic fevers.

### **Q: How is Marburg treated?**

**A:** There is no specific antiviral treatment for Marburg virus. Treatment is supportive and focuses on managing symptoms. This includes rehydration with fluids, balancing electrolytes, and using medications to reduce fever, pain, and control bleeding. Intensive supportive care can improve survival.

### **Q: Is there a vaccine for Marburg Virus Disease?**

**A:** As of now, there is no licensed vaccine for Marburg Virus Disease. However, some experimental vaccines are under development and testing, of which the Sabin Vaccine is being given to healthcare professionals and first responders in Rwanda at the moment.

### **Q: How can the spread of Marburg be prevented?**

**A:** Preventing the spread of Marburg requires:

- Isolating infected individuals.
- Wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) when caring for patients.
- Regular handwashing with soap or disinfectants.
- Safe burial practices to prevent exposure to bodily fluids of the deceased.

- Community education to encourage early identification and reporting of symptoms.
- Active community participation in contact tracing.
- Early transfer of suspected cases to treatment centres.

**Q: How fatal is Marburg Virus Disease?**

**A:** Marburg Virus Disease is highly fatal, with death rates ranging from 24% to 88% in previous outbreaks, depending on access to medical care, the overall outbreak response and other factors. Early treatment improves survival chances.

**Q: How do I care for someone who has survived Marburg?**

**A:** Survivors of Marburg may face physical and psychological aftereffects. Support them by ensuring they get medical follow-up care and encouraging gradual return to normal activities. Emotional and social support are also important as survivors may face stigma. Recovering patients are no longer contagious to others once they test negative, and their return home or transfer to a general hospital is safe. Rwanda Red Cross offers psycho-social support to people affected by Marburg. Call 2100 for help.

**Q: What should people do if they have symptoms of Marburg?**

**A:** Anyone experiencing symptoms such as fever, headache, or unexplained bleeding should immediately isolate themselves and contact local health authorities through the toll-free number.

**Q : Are treatment centers safe for patients?**

**A:** Public health authorities ensure that treatment centres are safe, equipped with appropriate materials and managed by skilled and trained professionals who can provide safe and adequate care to all patients with respect to their dignity and humanity.

Once at a hospital or treatment centre, health professionals and support personnel will provide you adequate care needed for your recovery.

Seeking care early when you are sick will improve your chance of survival and limit the transmission of the disease to your loved ones.

**Q: Who is at risk to contract Marburg? And what should I do if I have come into contact with someone infected with Marburg?**

**A:** A high-risk contact is someone who has had direct contact with an infected person's bodily fluids, or contaminated materials. If you are a high-risk contact, you should immediately report to health authorities by calling the toll-free number 114, self-isolate, and monitor yourself for symptoms for 21 days after the exposure.

**Q: What happens when someone dies of Marburg?**

**A:** The body of a person who has died from Marburg remains highly contagious. Safe and dignified burial practices must be followed, where trained personnel in full protective gear manage the burial to prevent contact with the body.

**Q: What is the Rwanda Red Cross doing to respond to the Marburg outbreak?**

**A:** The Rwanda Red Cross is involved in community engagement, educating people about Marburg virus, Safe and dignified burial. The National Society is also promoting hygiene practices, Community based surveillance, Psychosocial support for affected individuals and

families. Volunteers are trained in infection prevention, RCCE /community outreach, and safe burial practices.