

Summary of Illness Categories

Bloodborne Infections

Symptoms: Certain infections such as Ebola Virus Disease (EVD), hepatitis B (HBV), hepatitis C (HCV), and HIV/AIDS are carried in the bloodstreams of infected people. Individuals with EVD may experience fever, headache, muscle pain, diarrhea, vomiting, stomach pain, or unexplained bruising or bleeding. A person with HBV or HCV may have symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, fatigue and jaundice (a yellow appearance of the skin or white parts of the eyes). Individuals with HIV/AIDS may have a variety of symptoms, including headaches, fever, night sweats, nausea, vomiting or skin rashes. However, a person with some of these diseases may not have any symptoms at all, yet still be contagious.

How infection spreads: These infections can be spread when the blood or other body fluids of an infected person comes in contact with another person's broken skin, eyes, nose or lining of the mouth.

Gastrointestinal Infections

Symptoms: Germs such as the Ebola virus, Norovirus, and Salmonella may be present in the feces or vomit of an infected person. The organisms can cause symptoms including nausea, abdominal pain, vomiting, diarrhea, or fever. Similar symptoms may also be triggered by a sensitivity or allergy to a food or food additive.

How infection spreads: Vomiting or diarrhea may spread germs to surfaces that other people may touch and then touch their mouth with contaminated hands. Infection may also be spread through contaminated food or liquids, for example, if an ill person prepares food or drink for other people. However, Ebola virus is not spread through drinks or food.

Respiratory Infections

Symptoms: Germs (viruses or bacteria) in the respiratory system (such as measles, tuberculosis, influenza, or whooping cough) can cause symptoms including coughing, sneezing, fever, rash, and difficulty breathing). Similar symptoms may also be caused by non-infectious conditions, such as asthma, allergic reactions, or reactions to irritating substances.

How infection spreads: Coughing, sneezing, or even singing or talking may spread respiratory germs. Depending on what is causing the infection, germs may be spread when another person inhales them from droplets or aerosols expelled into the air by a cough or sneeze. Another way of spreading these germs is by touching contaminated surfaces with your hands, then touching your mouth, eyes, or nose, before washing your hands. Some infections, such as tuberculosis (TB), do not spread easily without close and prolonged contact, while others, such as measles, can be transmitted after brief contact. Ebola virus is not spread through the air.