EASTERN PENNSYLVANIA
HEALTH CARE QUALITY UNIT

# It's Your Health
# Winter 2014

the Advocacy Alliance
Toll Free 1-877-315-6855
www.theadvocacyalliance.org

## Ebola: Get the Facts

The Ebola virus causes an acute, serious illness which is often fatal if untreated. Ebola virus disease (EVD) first appeared in 1976 in 2 simultaneous outbreaks, one in Nzara, Sudan, and the other in Yambuku, Democratic Republic of Congo. The latter occurred in a village near the Ebola River, from which the disease takes its name.

There are 5 species of Ebola virus that have been identified: Zaire, Bundibugyo, Sudan, Reston and Taï Forest. The first 3, Bundibugyo ebolavirus, Zaire ebolavirus, and Sudan ebolavirus have been associated with large outbreaks in Africa. The virus causing the 2014 west African outbreak belongs to the Zaire species.

The current outbreak in west Africa, (first cases notified in March 2014), is the largest and most complex Ebola outbreak since the Ebola virus was first discovered. There have been more cases and deaths in this outbreak than all others combined. The most severely affected countries, Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia have very weak health systems, lacking human and infrastructural resources, having only recently emerged from long periods of conflict and instability. On August 8, 2014, the World Health Organization (WHO) Director-General declared this outbreak a Public Health Emergency of International Concern.

### Transmission

Because the natural reservoir of Ebola virus has not yet been identified, the way in which the virus first appears in a human at the start of an outbreak is unknown. However, researchers believe that the first patient becomes infected through contact with an infected animal, such as a fruit bat or nonhuman primate.

When an infection does occur in humans, the virus can be spread in several ways to others, including:

- Direct contact—through broken skin or unprotected mucous membranes (i.e., in the eyes, nose, or mouth);
- Blood or body fluids — including, but not limited to, feces, saliva, sweat, urine, vomit, breast milk, and semen, of a person who is sick with Ebola;
- Objects like needles and syringes that have been contaminated with the virus; and
- Infected fruit bats or primates (apes and monkeys).

Ebola is not spread through the air or by water, or in general, by food. However, in Africa, Ebola may be spread as a result of handling "bushmeat" (wild animals hunted for food) and contact with infected bats. There is no evidence that mosquitos or other insects can transmit Ebola virus, and only a few species of mammals (humans, bats, monkeys, and apes) have shown the ability to become infected with and spread Ebola virus.

## HCQU TRAININGS

Our Health Care Quality Unit is always available for trainings for groups large and small. In addition to group trainings, we offer web trainings 24 hours a day/7 days per week. If you are interested in scheduling a training, or have any questions about web trainings, please contact Heather Coleman, M.A., Director, Eastern PA Health Care Quality Unit Toll-free at 1-877-315-6855 or hs@theadvocacyalliance.org.

For a list of our current web trainings please go to http://www.easternpa-hcqu.org/Trainings/trainings.htm.

## Diagnosis

A person infected with Ebola virus is not contagious until symptoms appear, which can be anywhere from 2 to 21 days after exposure to Ebola virus. Signs and symptoms of Ebola include fever, severe headache, fatigue, muscle pain, weakness, diarrhea, vomiting, abdominal (stomach) pain, and unexplained hemorrhage (bleeding or bruising).

## Treatment & Recovery

No FDA-approved vaccine or medicine (e.g., antiviral drug) is available for Ebola. Symptoms of Ebola are treated as they appear. The following basic interventions, when used early, can significantly improve the chances of survival:

- Providing intravenous fluids and balancing electrolytes (body salts)
- Maintaining oxygen status and blood pressure
- Treating other infections if they occur
- Experimental vaccines and treatments for Ebola are under development, but they have not yet been fully tested for safety or effectiveness.

Recovery from Ebola depends on good supportive care and the patient's immune response. People who recover from Ebola infection develop antibodies that last for at least 10 years, possibly longer. It isn't known if people who recover are immune for life or if they can become infected with a different species of Ebola. Some people who have recovered from Ebola have developed long-term complications, such as joint and vision problems. The average case fatality rate is around 50%. Case fatality rates have varied from 25% to 90% in past outbreaks.

## Prevention

Prevention focuses on avoiding contact with the viruses. The following precautions can help prevent infection and spread of Ebola:

- Avoid areas of known outbreaks. Before traveling to Africa, find out about current epidemics by checking the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website.
- Wash your hands frequently. As with other infectious diseases, one of the most important preventive measures is frequent hand-washing. Use soap and water, or use alcohol-based hand rubs containing at least 60 percent alcohol when soap and water aren't available.
- Avoid bush meat. In developing countries, avoid buying or eating the wild animals, including nonhuman primates, sold in local markets.
- Avoid contact with infected people. In particular, caregivers should avoid contact with the person's body fluids and tissues, including blood, semen, vaginal secretions and saliva. People with Ebola or Marburg are most contagious in the later stages of the disease.
- Follow infection-control procedures. If you're a health care worker, wear protective clothing, such as gloves, masks, gowns and eye shields. Keep infected people isolated from others. Dispose of needles and sterilize other instruments.
- Don't handle remains. The bodies of people who have died of Ebola or Marburg disease are still contagious. Specially organized and trained teams should bury the remains, using appropriate safety equipment.

More information about Ebola is available at:
http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/index.html
http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs103/en/
http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/ebola-virus/basics/prevention/con-20031241

# TAKE CONTROL OF THE HOLIDAY STRESS

Don't let the holidays become something you dread. Instead, take steps to prevent the stress and depression that can descend during the holidays. Learn to recognize your holiday triggers, such as financial pressures or personal demands, so you can combat them before they lead to a meltdown. With a little planning and some positive thinking, you can find peace and joy during the holidays.

√ **Plan ahead.** Set aside specific days for shopping, baking, visiting friends and other activities. Plan your menus and then make your shopping list. That'll help prevent last-minute scrambling to buy forgotten ingredients, and make sure to line up help for party prep and cleanup.

√ **Learn to say no.** Saying yes when you should say no can leave you feeling resentful and overwhelmed. Friends and colleagues will understand if you can't participate in every project or activity. If it's not possible to say no when your boss asks you to work overtime, try to remove something else from your agenda to make up for the lost time.

√ **Don't abandon healthy habits.** Don't let the holidays become a free-for-all. Overindulgence only adds to your stress and guilt.

**Try these suggestions:**

- √ Have a healthy snack before holiday parties so that you don't go overboard on sweets, cheese or drinks.
- √ Get plenty of sleep.
- √ Incorporate regular physical activity into each day.

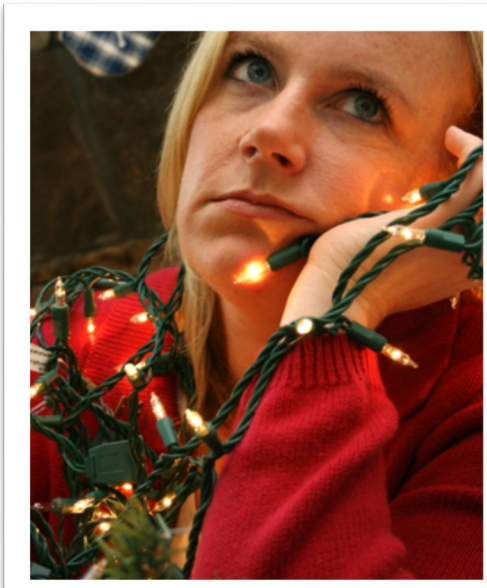
√ **Take a breather.** Make some time for yourself. Spending just 15 minutes alone, without distractions, may refresh you enough to handle everything you need to do. Find something that reduces stress, clears your mind, slows your breathing and restores inner calm.

**Some healthy options may include:**

- √ Taking a walk at night and stargazing.
- √ Listening to soothing music.
- √ Getting a massage.
- √ Reading a book.

√ **Seek professional help if you need it.** Despite your best efforts, you may find yourself feeling persistently sad or anxious, plagued by physical complaints, unable to sleep, irritable and hopeless, and unable to face routine chores. If these feelings last for a while, talk to your doctor or a mental health professional.

# Stress, Depression and the Holidays



*Stress and depression can ruin your holidays and hurt your health. Being realistic, planning ahead and seeking support can help ward off stress and depression.*

The holiday season often brings unwelcome guests — ***stress*** and ***depression***. It is no wonder when the holidays present a dizzying array of demands — parties, shopping, baking, cleaning and entertaining, to name just a few.

With some practical tips, you can minimize the stress that accompanies the holidays. You may even end up enjoying the holidays more than you thought you would!

## Tips to prevent holiday stress and depression

When stress is at its peak, it's hard to stop and regroup. Try to prevent stress and depression in the first place, especially if the holidays have taken an emotional toll on you in the past.

**Acknowledge your feelings.** If someone close to you has recently died or you can't be with loved ones, realize that it's normal to feel sadness and grief. It's OK to take time to cry or express your feelings. You can't force yourself to be happy just because it's the holiday season.

**Reach out.** If you feel lonely or isolated, seek out community, religious or other social events. They can offer support and companionship. Volunteering your time to help others also is a good way to lift your spirits and broaden your friendships.

**Be realistic.** The holidays don't have to be perfect or just like last year. As families change and grow, traditions and rituals often change as well. Choose a few to hold on to, and be open to creating new ones. For example, if your adult children can't come to your house, find new ways to celebrate together, such as sharing pictures, emails or videos.

**Set aside differences.** Try to accept family members and friends as they are, even if they don't live up to all of your expectations. Set aside grievances until a more appropriate time for discussion, and be understanding if others get upset or distressed when something goes awry. Chances are they're feeling the effects of holiday stress and depression, too.

**Stick to a budget.** Before you go gift and food shopping, decide how much money you can afford to spend — then stick to your budget!. Don't try to buy happiness with an avalanche of gifts.

**Try these gift-giving alternatives to cut down on your holiday stress:**

- Donate to a charity in someone's name.
- Give homemade gifts.
- Start a family gift exchange.

http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-living/stress-management/in-depth/stress/art-20047544

# Dual Diagnosis Training

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (OMHSAS) and the Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) have undertaken a joint initiative to address the needs of people who have an intellectual disability as well as mental health challenges. People who have both of these challenges are commonly referred to as those who have Dual Diagnosis. For the purpose of this training, Dual Diagnosis is not referring to co-occurring mental health challenges and substance abuse or dependence, although people can have substance abuse or dependence issues as well as a Dual Diagnosis of intellectual disability and mental health challenges. The curriculum was designed for Direct Supporters, Supports Coordinators and others who work in either the intellectual disability field or the mental health field.

The ultimate goal of this training curriculum is to provide information that can aid in the understanding of the struggles and the triumphs of those you support or will support. This curriculum was designed to demonstrate the complexity of Dual Diagnosis and the factors that need to be considered to best support those with whom you come into contact. The Pennsylvania Dual Diagnosis Direct Support Curriculum was also designed to demonstrate that all people in this world, regardless of their challenges, are much more alike than they are different.

**If you are interested in scheduling a training for your organization or group, please contact 1-877-315-6855. For more information on our training topics, please scan the QR matrix code on the right.**

## Check out these websites mentioned in this edition of "It's Your Health"

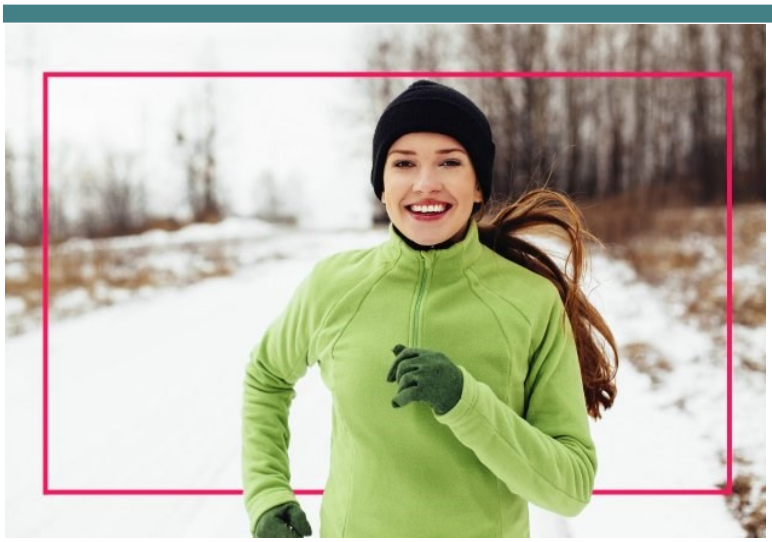
http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/index.html

http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs103/en/

http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/ebola-virus/basics/prevention/con-20031241

http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-living/stress-management/in-depth/stress/art-20047544

http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-living/fitness/in-depth/fitness/art-20045626



# Winter Fitness: Safety Tips for Exercising in Cold Weather

Cold weather can discourage even the most motivated exercisers, and if you're not as motivated, it's all too easy to pack away your workout gear along with your warm-weather clothing. You don't have to let cold weather spell the end of your exercise. With these tips for exercising during cold weather, you can stay fit, motivated and warm when the weather turns chilly.

## TIPS TO STAY SAFE DURING COLD-WEATHER EXERCISE

Almost everyone can exercise safely during cold weather, but if you have certain conditions, such as asthma, heart problems or Raynaud's disease, check with your doctor before you work out in cold weather. Your doctor can review any special precautions you need based on your condition or medications you might take.

The following tips can help you stay safe and warm while exercising in the cold.

### ❄ PAY ATTENTION TO WEATHER CONDITIONS AND WIND CHILL

Before heading out, check the forecast for the time you'll be outside. Temperature, wind and moisture, along with the length of time that you'll be outside, are key considerations in planning a safe cold-weather workout. Pay attention to the wind chill factor! The combination of wind and cold make up the wind chill index, which is commonly included in winter weather forecasts. Wind chill extremes can make exercising outdoors unsafe even if you dress warmly. The wind can penetrate your clothes and remove the insulating layer of warm air that surrounds your body, and any exposed skin is vulnerable to frostbite. (See chart below) Although the risk of frostbite is less than 5 percent when the air temperature is above 5 F (minus 15 C), the risk increases as the wind chill falls. At wind chill levels below minus 18 F (minus 27 C), frostbite can occur on exposed skin in 30 minutes or less.

If the temperature dips below 0 F (minus 17.8 C) or the wind chill is extreme, consider taking a break or choosing an indoor exercise instead. Similarly, consider putting off your workout if it's raining or snowing unless you have waterproof gear. Getting wet makes you more vulnerable to the cold, and if you get soaked, you may not be able to keep your core body temperature high enough.

### ❄DON'T FORGET SAFETY GEAR — AND SUNSCREEN

If it's dark when you exercise outside, wear reflective clothing. To stay steady on your feet, choose footwear with enough traction to prevent falls, especially if it's icy or snowy. Also, be sure to let someone know your exercise route and your expected return time, in case something does go wrong. Wear a helmet while skiing, snowboarding and snowmobiling.

**Temperature (°F)**

| Wind (mph) | Calm | 40 | 35 | 30 | 25 | 20 | 15 | 10 | 5 | 0 | -5 | -10 | -15 | -20 | -25 | -30 | -35 | -40 | -45 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | | 36 | 31 | 25 | 19 | 13 | 7 | 1 | -5 | -11 | -16 | -22 | -28 | -34 | -40 | -46 | -52 | -57 | -63 |
| 10 | | 34 | 27 | 21 | 15 | 9 | 3 | -4 | -10 | -16 | -22 | -28 | -35 | -41 | -47 | -53 | -59 | -66 | -72 |
| 15 | | 32 | 25 | 19 | 13 | 6 | 0 | -7 | -13 | -19 | -26 | -32 | -39 | -45 | -51 | -58 | -64 | -71 | -77 |
| 20 | | 30 | 24 | 17 | 11 | 4 | -2 | -9 | -15 | -22 | -29 | -35 | -42 | -48 | -55 | -61 | -68 | -74 | -81 |
| 25 | | 29 | 23 | 16 | 9 | 3 | -4 | -11 | -17 | -24 | -31 | -37 | -44 | -51 | -58 | -64 | -71 | -78 | -84 |
| 30 | | 28 | 22 | 15 | 8 | 1 | -5 | -12 | -19 | -26 | -33 | -39 | -46 | -53 | -60 | -67 | -73 | -80 | -87 |
| 35 | | 28 | 21 | 14 | 7 | 0 | -7 | -14 | -21 | -27 | -34 | -41 | -48 | -55 | -62 | -69 | -76 | -82 | -89 |
| 40 | | 27 | 20 | 13 | 6 | -1 | -8 | -15 | -22 | -29 | -36 | -43 | -50 | -57 | -64 | -71 | -78 | -84 | -91 |
| 45 | | 26 | 19 | 12 | 5 | -2 | -9 | -16 | -23 | -30 | -37 | -44 | -51 | -58 | -65 | -72 | -79 | -86 | -93 |
| 50 | | 26 | 19 | 12 | 4 | -3 | -10 | -17 | -24 | -31 | -38 | -45 | -52 | -60 | -67 | -74 | -81 | -88 | -95 |
| 55 | | 25 | 18 | 11 | 4 | -3 | -11 | -18 | -25 | -32 | -39 | -46 | -54 | -61 | -68 | -75 | -82 | -89 | -97 |
| 60 | | 25 | 17 | 10 | 3 | -4 | -11 | -19 | -26 | -33 | -40 | -48 | -55 | -62 | -69 | -76 | -84 | -91 | -98 |

Frostbite Times: 30 minutes | 10 minutes | 5 minutes

Wind Chill (°F) = $35.74 + 0.6215T - 35.75(V^{0.16}) + 0.4275T(V^{0.16})$

Where, T= Air Temperature (°F) V= Wind Speed (mph)

*Effective 11/01/01*

Consider using chemical heat packs to warm up your hands or feet, especially if you have a tendency to have cold fingers and toes or if you have a condition such as Raynaud's disease. Don't forget that it's as easy to get sunburned in winter as in summer and even more so if you're exercising in the snow or at high altitudes. Wear a sunscreen that blocks both UVA and UVB rays and a lip balm that contains sunscreen as well, and protect your eyes from snow and ice glare with dark glasses or goggles.

## ❄ DRINK PLENTY OF FLUIDS

You need to stay well hydrated when exercising in cold weather just as you do when exercising in warm weather. Drink water or sports drinks before, during and after your workout, even if you're not really thirsty. You can become just as dehydrated in the cold as in the heat from sweating, breathing, the drying power of the winter wind, and increased urine production, but it may be harder to notice during cold weather.

## ❄ KNOW THE SIGNS OF FROSTBITE AND HYPOTHERMIA

When it's cold, blood flow is concentrated on your body's core, leaving your head, hands and feet vulnerable to frostbite. Frostbite is an injury to the body that is caused by freezing, and is most common on exposed skin, such as your cheeks, nose and ears, but it can also occur on hands and feet. Early warning signs include numbness, loss of feeling or a stinging sensation. If you suspect frostbite, get out of the cold immediately and slowly warm the affected area, but don't rub it since that can damage your skin. If numbness continues, seek emergency care.

To prevent frostbite, try wearing a thin pair of glove liners made of a wicking material (like polypropylene) under a pair of heavier gloves or mittens lined with wool or fleece. Put on the mittens or gloves before your hands become cold and then remove the outer pair if your hands begin to sweat. Considering buying exercise shoes a half-size or one size larger than usual to allow for thick thermal socks or an extra pair of regular socks. And don't forget a hat to protect your head or headband to protect your ears. If it's very cold, consider wearing a scarf or ski mask to cover your face.

Hypothermia is abnormally low body temperature. When exposed to cold temperatures, your body begins to lose heat faster than it can be produced. Exercising in cold, rainy weather increases the risk of hypothermia, as does being an older adult. Hypothermia signs and symptoms include intense shivering, slurred speech, loss of coordination and fatigue. Seek emergency help right away for possible hypothermia.

## ❄ DRESS IN LAYERS

One of the biggest mistakes you can make when exercising in cold weather is to dress too warmly. Exercise generates a considerable amount of heat — enough to make you feel like it's much warmer than it really is. The evaporation of sweat, however, can make you lose heat from your body and feel chilled. The solution? Dress in layers that you can remove as soon as you start to sweat and then put back on as needed.

First, put on a thin layer of synthetic material, such as polypropylene, which draws sweat away from your body. Avoid cotton, which stays wet next to your skin. Next, add a layer of fleece or wool for insulation. Top this with a waterproof, breathable outer layer. You may need to experiment before you find a combination of clothing that works well for you based on your exercise intensity. If you're lean, you may need more insulation than someone who is heavier. Keep in mind, too, that stop-and-go activities, such as mixing walking with running, can make you more vulnerable to the cold if you repeatedly work up a sweat and then get chilly.

Credit: http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-living/fitness/in-depth/fitness/art-20045626

744 N. 19th Street
Allentown, PA 18104

the Advocacy Alliance




Ideas for Our Newsletter?

Contact:

Heather Coleman, M.A., Director
Eastern PA Health Care Quality Unit
Toll-free at 1-877-315-6855 or
hs@theadvocacyalliance.org.