

Transmitting Ebola

We live in a world of unprecedented global connectivity. While the world wide web connects us digitally, air travel can get anyone from pretty much any place in the world to pretty much any place in the world in a day or less.

With the internet serving as a global digital network tying together international businesses like never before, the need for physical international travel for sales pitches, meetings, training and hand-shakes has kept the air travel industry very much afloat — several airline companies are even developing the next generation of supersonic commercial jets.

With millions of people being exposed to a sealed environment aboard an airplane, and touching door handles, banisters and faucets throughout the world's largest airport hubs, air travel also becomes a perfect breeding and spreading ground for some of the world's worst diseases.

The 2014 Ebola Outbreak has far surpassed any previous outbreaks, with more than 8,000 reported cases, and a death toll climbing steadily north of 4,000.

Ebola is a Biosafety Level 4 Virus, requiring the highest level of containment reserved for the most dangerous and exotic viruses. Those exposed have to be closely monitored for symptoms, and absolutely should not use methods of mass public transportation for travel. Unfortunately, this level of containment is next to impossible to achieve — those exposed to Ebola often ignore symptoms, or simply do not realize they have been exposed, therefore do not follow protocols. The Center for Disease Control has been battling to contain the outbreak in Africa, however, monitoring and enforcing biosafety protocols of in Third World countries is problematic due to outdated, insufficient facilities, improper nutrition and low or substandard medical supplies.

The failure in adhering to Ebola containment protocols is not limited to the Third World. Amber Vinson, 29, a nurse at the Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital boarded a plane after having cared for an Ebola patient. She boarded with a fever of 99.5, according to a CDC spokesperson.

Amber was later diagnosed with Ebola, and transferred to Emory Hospital in Atlanta for containment and treatment.

The key to containing Ebola is self-monitoring, especially for health care workers. Monitoring your body temperature, staying hydrated, disinfecting hands and medical equipment, getting plenty of rest and maintaining a healthy immune system could reduce the chances of infection and prepare your body to fight the virus in the worst case scenario. If any Ebola symptoms occur in your patient or yourself, act quickly to keep it from spreading.

