

Fighting Ebola epidemic

STAR HEALTH DESK

Since its outbreak, the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) has killed several thousand people and is still continuing its ravaging effects in West Africa. Not just in Africa, at least 17 people were treated outside Africa who have contracted the disease, treated and two of them have died recently. Scientists, healthcare professionals, World Health Organisation (WHO) have urged everyone to work together to contain the epidemic and prevent its deadly consequences the world might face.

Ebola is a deadly virus that has a fatality as high as 90 percent. Symptoms usually begin about eight to 10 days after exposure to the virus, but can appear as late as 21 days after exposure. EVD presents much as many other viral infections do, with nonspecific signs such as fever, headache, sore throat and body aches. After a few days, however, the predominant clinical syndrome is a severe gastrointestinal illness with vomiting and diarrhea, symptoms of impaired kidney and liver function, and in some cases, both internal and external bleeding.

Ebola then spreads through human-to-human transmission via direct contact (through broken skin or mucous membranes) with the blood, secretions, organs or other bodily



fluids of infected people, and with surfaces and materials (e.g. bedding, clothing) contaminated with these fluids.

Humans who contracted the virus are not infectious until they develop symptoms. People remain infectious as long as their

blood and body fluids, including semen and breast milk, contain the virus. Men who have recovered from the disease can still transmit the virus through their semen for up to 7 weeks after recovery from illness.

Although Bangladesh is not

listed as high risk country for Ebola epidemic, the recent return from 6 Bangladeshis from Liberia, an Ebola affected country has escalated the fear. They are reported to be healthy so far.

However, as the disease may take upto 21 days to evolve,

appropriate measures should be taken to track and follow them for symptoms. Although Bangladesh's health ministry declared the 90-day surveillance and medical teams were deployed at 25 entry points, including international airports, seaports and land ports to monitor Ebola infiltration, some people may carry the virus at their healthy state. Experts believe the risk is still low but could give a big blow to a country like Bangladesh if precaution is not taken properly.

Amid fear, there is still hope that we can fight back Ebola. The World Health Organisation has recently declared that the Ebola outbreak in Senegal, one of the epidemic countries is officially over. It is a good example of what to do when faced with an imported case of Ebola.

Although there is no proven antiviral drug or vaccine, many lives have been saved with supportive care. Many experts opined that supportive care is also specific care for EVD — and in all likelihood reduces mortality. Unfortunately, many patients in West Africa continue to die for lack of the opportunity to receive such basic care.

In the end, whatever measures the other countries have taken to prevent entry of the virus, the world will remain in threat if the epidemic is not going to be stopped in West Africa.

DID YOU KNOW?

Eating breakfast reduces cravings, overeating

Many people especially teenagers do not eat breakfast as required and this likely increases the chance they will overeat and put on weight. A new study published in the Nutrition Journal finds when late-teen girls eat breakfast, it raises levels of a chemical in the brain's reward center that may help them stop craving sweet foods and overeating during the rest of the day.



Researchers have found that breakfasts that have normal amount of protein and are high in protein — both reduced cravings for savory - or high-fat - foods. On the other hand, if breakfast is skipped, these cravings continue to rise throughout the day. But compared to a normal-protein breakfast, the high-protein breakfast tended to be followed by greater reductions in cravings for savory food and sustained levels in dopamine metabolite up until lunch. Higher levels of dopamine metabolite stimulates feelings of reward that regulates food intake.

Dopamine levels are blunted in individuals who are overweight or obese, which means that it takes much more stimulation - or food - to elicit feelings of reward; we saw similar responses within breakfast-skippers.

There is a lot of evidence that breakfast really is the most important meal of the day. Studies suggested that eating a large breakfast could boost fertility for women with PCOS and lower the risk of heart disease, diabetes and blood pressure.

HEALTH bulletin

Detergent pods pose risk to kids' eyes

The popular pods that hold liquid laundry or dishwasher detergent can pose a danger to kids, especially to their eyes, a new study reports in the Journal of the American Association for Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus.

Researchers say parents should keep the pods away from children because if kids squeeze or bite them, the liquid inside can squirt out and enter the eyes, mouth or nose.

If you do gain weight, polyunsaturated fats may prevent some damage

Muffins — and other fatty foods — can definitely put on the pounds, but those made with polyunsaturated oil may be safer for your heart than if they are made with saturated fats like butter, a study published in the Journal of the American Heart Association suggests.

That is because olive oil, sunflower oil and other polyunsaturated fats that include safflower oil, corn oil, soybean oil and canola oil, will not increase bad cholesterol like butter or palm oil, the researchers found.



Bedwetting: the practical solution

DR AHMED HELAL

Bedwetting is a normal phenomenon in infants and young children. But after the age of 5 to 6 years, urination should be controlled by children himself or herself. In some cases, the children over that age, adolescents and also in some adults are experiencing such embracing condition that they wet bed during sleep, especially in night and some time in day also.

In Bangladesh, a community based survey done on 2009 by National Institute of Mental Health, Dhaka and revealed that 3% children aged 5-17 years are suffer from bedwetting. It can occur from many causes including organic and also from mental causes.

Most of the cases the hidden causes are mental stress and anxiety. Common cause are-anxiety due to any cause, like academic pressure, pressure from parents, having a family history, mental stress, like bullying at school, loose bondage among family members, separation from mother, birth of new sibling, neglect by parents or society, victim of physical, sexual or verbal abuse or any disorder in urinary system or hormonal problems.

To overcome bedwetting, few to do things for parents are:

- Toilet training from the age of 20 months of age, which can prevent the bed wetting habit.

- Try to understand kid's expression- what she/he want, how they

express their desire to void.

- Set alarm during night and wake up the child to void in toilet.
- Include the fiber rich food in their meal, which will prevent constipation as well as bed wetting.
- Avoid excessive drinking water to child before bedtime.
- If the child wets bed, wake up him/her and engage them to change the bed sheet and others, involve them actively to change the wet cloths.
- Arrange some reward method, like put a sticker in calendar on the day of bed wetting and count at the end of the months the dry-day and wet-day; provide some small reward (Chocolate, balloon etc) for each dry

day to them.

- Give quality time to child, search any cause which produce anxiety or mental stress to the child and try to mitigate those.
- If need use alarm-bed, which is the special bed made with calling bed which buzz just during the time of wet.
- Take specialist's advice and medication, medication has tremendous role in nocturnal enuresis.

The writer is Assistant Professor of Child Adolescent and Family Psychiatry, National Institute of Mental Health, Dhaka. E-mail: soton73@gmail.com



Knowing for better living

If you have **diabetes** you are **2 to 4 times** more likely to develop **cardiovascular disease** than people without diabetes

Control your diabetes

Maintain a healthy diet

Control your body weight

Avoid smoking

Exercise regularly

Consult your Doctor