

HOW GERMS SPREAD

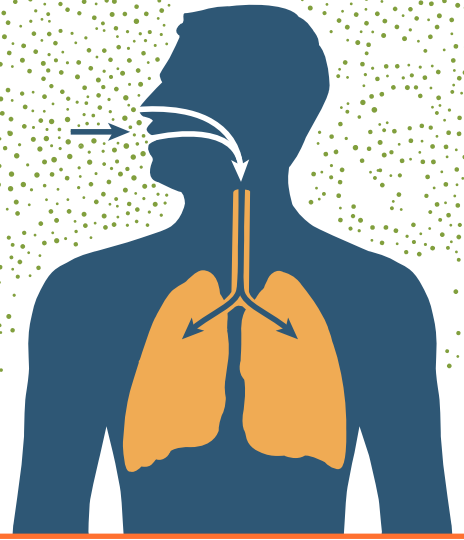
What's the difference between infections spread through the air or by droplets?

AIRBORNE SPREAD

Airborne spread happens when germs float through the air after a person talks, coughs, or sneezes. Those germs can be inhaled even after the original person is no longer nearby.

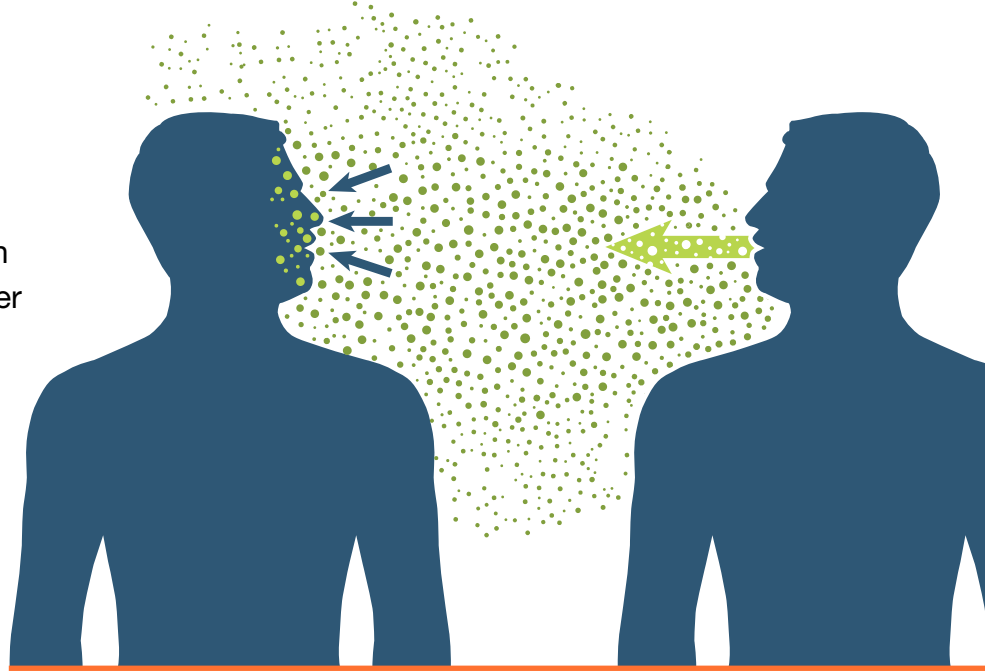
Direct contact with the infectious person is NOT needed for someone else to get sick.

Germs like chicken pox and TB are spread through the air.



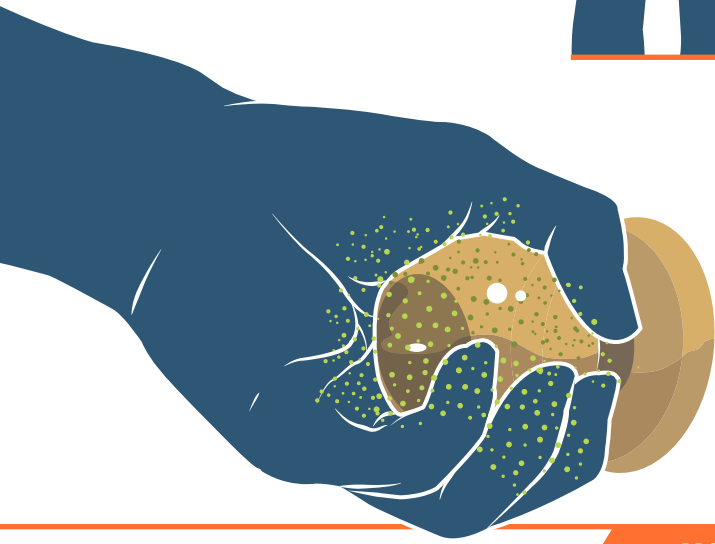
DROPLET SPREAD

Droplet spread happens when droplets that are coughed or sneezed from a sick person splash the eyes, nose, or mouth of another person, or cause environmental contamination, like a soiled bathroom surface or handrails, from which another person can pick up the infectious material.



A person might also get infected by touching a surface or object that has germs on it and then touching their eyes, mouth or nose. Droplets generally travel shorter distances, less than about 6 feet from a source patient.

Germs like plague, meningitis, and Ebola can be spread through large droplets.



HOW DO I PROTECT MYSELF FROM GETTING SICK?

- **Wash your hands** often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- **Avoid close contact with people who are sick.**
- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.** Germs spread this way.
- **Routinely clean and disinfect commonly touched surfaces** like bathroom surfaces, since some germs can stay infectious on surfaces for hours or days and lead to transmission.



HOW EBOLA SPREADS

▶ Is Ebola airborne?

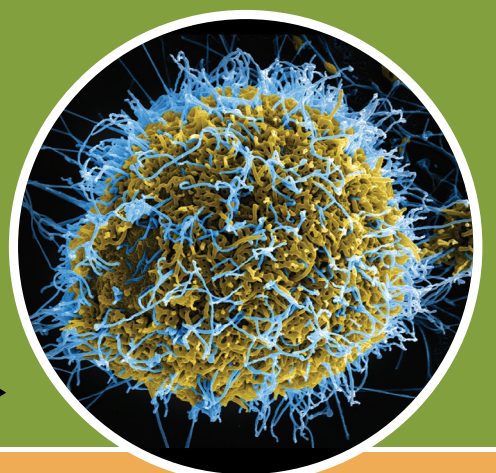
No. Ebola is not spread through the airborne route.

▶ Is Ebola spread through droplets?

Yes. To get Ebola, you have to directly get body fluids (e.g., blood, diarrhea, vomit, urine, semen, breast milk) from someone who is sick with Ebola in your mouth, nose, eyes or through a break in your skin or through sexual contact. That can happen by being splashed with droplets, or through other direct contact, like touching infectious body fluids.

Healthcare providers caring for Ebola patients and the family and friends in close contact with Ebola patients are at the highest risk of getting sick when they touch or are splashed by infectious blood or body fluids from a sick patient.

There has been no recognized spread of Ebola through the air or water.



A human cell infected with Ebola ▶