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Ebola Myths & Facts

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Introduction

Ebola.

It's on most people's minds to varying degrees. Some people watch the news coverage and wonder what it all means. You've probably seen the devastation in West Africa and wonder how it could have happened so fast and when it will end. You've seen cases come overseas into the United States, and you ask if the United States (and possibly Canada and Western Europe) is next for a big outbreak. Some people are seeing new policies at work and in public places as a result of a heightened public awareness. You may even be right in the thick of things, battling on the front lines to stop the current outbreak in West Africa from getting worse and doing what you can to help the people who need it most.

Once upon a time a public health emergency in West Africa may have felt far away, remote, and not applicable to you. But in today's global society — with technology and mass travel and family members and friends spread out in all directions — an emergency anywhere can feel like it's right in your own backyard.

Wherever you are, whatever you're doing, chances are good that Ebola has somehow impacted your life, even if it's just to prompt your curiosity to know more about this virus and outbreak — and maybe even public health in general.

This outbreak is a scary yet fascinating experience. The Ebola outbreak of 2014 is unprecedented, and the world is trying to figure out how to respond together. From providing care on the front lines to educating communities to examining world health policy, the outbreak is a complex issue to make sense of and do something about. Science, history, and politics have intersected, and it's everyone's job to discover as much as possible to help stop the crisis in West Africa, keep everyone safe and sound all across the world — at home and abroad — and move forward as a world united with a mission to prevent something like this outbreak in the future.
**About This Book**

People are trying to process what’s happening, and what they can and should do about it. Reading *Ebola Myths & Facts For Dummies* is a good start. It contains no hype, no spin. It’s just the facts, ma’am (or sir), and it’s meant to give you a thorough, yet easy-to-understand guide.

It presents the basics (like how you can prevent yourself from getting Ebola), and also touches on some of the more layered issues, such as the ways different countries have responded to this outbreak. It does this all in plain English, sharing as much factual information as possible, rather than going on about my opinions or theories.

This book is a reference tool you can turn to in order to understand whatever particular aspect of Ebola you want. The beauty is that you don’t have to read through the entire book cover to cover to get the information you want. You can simply open to the table of contents, find what you’re looking for, and head directly to that section.

You can expect to find useful reference material such as:

- How this virus was discovered and how it led to this outbreak (refer to Chapter 2)
- How to know if someone has Ebola (head to Chapter 5)
- What to expect and how to prepare if you’re a health worker heading into the affected areas (check out Chapter 7)
- A quick rundown of the most common myths busted (flip to Chapter 8)

**Foolish Assumptions**

In order to write something that was clear and helpful, I had to zero in on who I thought would read this book. So even though I never like to assume, I have to admit, I did make a few assumptions here in this book about you as my readers:

- You have heard or seen at least something about Ebola in the news or maybe from a friend or co-worker.
- You have come here to discover the facts on Ebola.