What is the Ebola Virus Disease?
Ebola, previously known as Ebola hemorrhagic fever, is a rare and deadly disease caused by infection with one of the five identified Ebola virus strains.

What are the symptoms of Ebola?
Symptoms of the Ebola virus appear anywhere from 2 to 21 days after exposure to Ebola and include:

- Fever (greater than 38.6°C or 101.5°F)
- Severe headache
- Muscle pain
- Weakness
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Abdominal (stomach) pain
- Unexplained hemorrhage (bleeding or bruising)

How is Austin Regional Clinic protecting patients, visitors, and staff from Ebola?
Austin Regional Clinic has established protocols for our staff, nurses, and physicians to follow. We are trained and prepared to take care of patients with a variety of infectious diseases, including Ebola Virus Disease. We are also collaborating with the Austin/Travis County Health and Human Services Department (ATCHHSD), Austin/Travis County EMS (ATCEMS), and other local health care facilities. ARC’s Pandemic Committee ensures that our response is consistent with the standards established by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), local officials, and local disease control experts. ATCHHSD is acting as central command for Williamson and Hays County as well, so our protocols will remain the same for every one of our ARC facilities.

We are screening patients with Ebola-like symptoms with travel and exposure history. Austin Regional Clinic is prepared to follow all CDC protocols, including isolating patients and taking proper infection control precautions to avoid exposure and exposing others.

What precautions are Austin Regional Clinic taking to meet CDC requirements?
Austin Regional Clinic is prepared to follow all CDC precautions and continues to ensure that all staff becomes properly trained. We have established the following protocols for the current phase of infection control:

- Screen patients with Ebola-like symptoms for travel and exposure history.
- Require staff to properly put on and properly remove personal protective equipment, including masks, gloves, gowns, and eye protection.
- Notify ARC officials and City of Austin health officials about all suspected cases and anyone who has had direct contact with the blood or body fluids, such as but not limited to feces, saliva, urine, vomit, and semen of a person who is sick with Ebola.
- In the unlikely event of dealing with a suspected Ebola case, our staff and physicians are trained to follow CDC isolation procedure.

To keep our phone lines clear for patients who need to make appointments, please direct any questions you may have to our ARC information line at 512-272-4636.
How is Ebola transmitted?
Ebola can only be spread to others after symptoms begin. Ebola viruses are transmitted through direct contact with blood or body fluids. Ebola is not spread through the air or by water, or in general, food.

What does “direct contact” mean?
Direct contact means that body fluids (blood, saliva, mucus, vomit, urine, or feces) from an infected person (alive or dead) have touched someone’s eyes, nose, or mouth or an open cut, wound, or abrasion.

What are body fluids?
Ebola has been detected in blood and many body fluids. Body fluids include saliva, mucus, vomit, feces, sweat, tears, breast milk, urine, and semen.

Can Ebola spread by coughing or sneezing?
Ebola is only transmitted by direct contact with body fluids of a person who has symptoms of Ebola disease. Coughing and sneezing are not common symptoms of Ebola, but if a patient with Ebola coughs or sneezes on someone, and saliva or mucus come into contact with that person’s eyes, nose or mouth, these fluids may transmit the disease.

Can Ebola be spread through mosquitoes?
There is no evidence that mosquitoes or other insects can transmit Ebola viruses. Only mammals (for example, humans, bats, monkeys and apes) have shown the ability to spread and become infected with Ebola virus.

How long does Ebola live outside the body?
Ebola is killed with hospital-grade disinfectants (such as household bleach). Ebola on dried surfaces such as doorknobs and countertops can survive for several hours; however, virus in body fluids (such as blood) can survive up to several days at room temperature.

If someone survives Ebola, can he or she still spread the virus?
Once someone recovers from Ebola, they can no longer spread the virus. However, Ebola virus has been found in semen for up to 3 months. People who recover from Ebola are advised to abstain from sex or use condoms for 3 months.

Can dogs or cats get infected or sick with Ebola?
At this time, there have been no reports of dogs or cats becoming sick with Ebola or of being able to spread Ebola to people or other animals. Even in areas in Africa where Ebola is present, there have been no reports of dogs and cats becoming sick with Ebola. There is limited evidence that dogs become infected with Ebola virus, but there is no evidence that they develop disease.

Can bats spread Ebola?
Fruit bats in Africa are considered to be a natural reservoir for Ebola. Bats in North America are not known to carry Ebola and so CDC considers the risk of an Ebola outbreak from bats occurring in the United States to be very low. However, bats are known to carry rabies and other diseases here in the United States. To reduce the risk of disease transmission, never attempt to touch a bat, living or dead.

Where can I find more information about Ebola?
Additional information is available at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website: http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/.