Q25. I want to help in someway but I don’t know what I can do. Is there someone I can contact to offer my help?

A. There are many ways you can help – everyone in the community needs to work together to fight Marburg. One of the things you can do, is to inform the health workers if you suspect someone is sick with Marburg. The best way to stop this disease spreading is to get patients into hospital quickly. Talk to health workers or your local community leaders about how you can help.

Q26. Can a person who recovered from Marburg get the disease again?

A. There is some protection after getting Marburg but current evidence shows that it is not life long. So a person can get infected again.

Q1. My relative is in the hospital and is now recovering from the Marburg disease. Is it safe for her to come home?

A. As long as your relative is not sick and she has been told by the doctors that she can leave, then it will be safe for her to come home. Doctors will observe her for a while even though she will be feeling better. If she remains healthy she will be allowed to go home. At this stage you will be safe to be in contact with her normally. Hundreds of people have survived past Marburg outbreaks and have not infected anyone after recovery. Married couples are advised to avoid unprotected sex for 3 months or to abstain from sex.

Q2. Two of my neighbours have died from Marburg and our houses are very close. I am scared to stay in my house. Is it safe?

A. It is safe to live in your house. Marburg disease can only be spread through direct contact with body fluids like saliva, urine or blood of an infected person or the body of someone who has died from the disease. Any bedding used by the sick person should be burned or buried and their houses disinfected with JIK as an extra precaution.

Q3. My child has had a bad headache for nearly two days does he/she have Marburg?

A. If he only has a headache, it is not likely that he/she has Marburg. But you should alert a health worker if he develops a fever or sickness or if you know that he has had contact with someone who may have Marburg. The health worker
will make an assessment. You should continue to watch your child’s health but a headache alone is not cause for concern as Marburg.

**Q4. How can I know that someone has Marburg disease?**

**A.** A person suffering from Marburg presents with sudden onset of high fever with any of the following: headache, vomits blood, has joint and muscle pains, bleeds through the body openings, i.e. eyes, nose, gums, ears, anus and has reduced urine.

**Q5. How long does it take for the disease to show signs that a person is infected?**

**A.** The signs can appear at anytime between 2 to 21 days after exposure to the virus. This period is called incubation period.

**Q6. Are women more at risk of getting Marburg than men?**

**A.** The risks are the same for everyone but more women can be exposed to the disease because they take care of suspected Marburg patients before they are taken to the health facility. It is important to ensure that there is no direct contact (skin to skin, body fluids) between patients and their carers. Other than the traditional roles women have played in taking care of patients and also at burial ceremonies, the risk is equal for men and women.

**Q21. Is it safe to travel by bus or taxi or go to areas with lots of people?**

**A.** It is safe as long as you are not touching body fluids of a sick people.

**Q22. Can someone who has recovered from Marburg still have a sexual relationship?**

**A.** The advice is to take precautions that you would take to prevent AIDS – so use a condom. Many people who have survived Marburg have not gone on to infect partners after they have recovered but there is evidence that the virus may remain in the semen for a while. Until the experts establish the risk, it is advisable to use condoms or abstain from sex for at least 3 months. However, other body contact will not be a risk once the patient is well.

**Q23. How safe am I if doctors and nurses examine me yet they are more at risk of getting Marburg?**

**A.** You are not at risk of getting Marburg from health staff. This is because, health staff is fully trained in the risks involved and they use protective wear.

**Q24. We are worried about what we can eat. Can we eat wild meat?**

**A.** No. It’s better to absolutely avoid touching and eating wild meat.
Q17. Can you catch Marburg from touching money?

A. You cannot get the disease from handling money. You can only get Marburg from contact with people sick with the disease. For extra protection, however, it is a good idea not to shake hands during the outbreak. And if you must shake hands, wash them thoroughly with soap and water.

Q18. Should we stop having sex with our partners because of Marburg?

A. Continue with your lives as normal but if you suspect that your partner is sick, avoid sharing the same bed and seek medical advice immediately. The sweat and sexual fluids contain the virus which will infect the other partner. If your spouse falls sick and recovers, abstain from sex for 3 months or have only protected sex.

Q19. Can you get Marburg from markets?

A. No, markets are safe but take care not to have unnecessary contact with people. Remember this is not an airborne disease; it can only be transmitted through direct contact with body fluids from a sick or dead person.

Q20. How safe are the bars and lodging houses in town?

A. The bars and the lodging houses are very safe. The disease is not carried in the air. You can only get it from touching someone who is sick with Marburg. Take care by not sharing eating utensils.

Q7. A family in our village wants to bury a friend who died of Marburg nearby. Wont this make the disease spread?

A. Health personnel should supervise the burials. The most important thing is that all burials take place quickly without the usual ceremonies of washing the body, feasting and communal hand washing. Dead bodies should not be touched without rubber gloves. They should be put in plastic body bags or polythene sacks and buried immediately to avoid spreading the disease to others.

Q8. My nephew became ill and was confirmed to have Marburg disease. Although I avoided touching him, when we took him to hospital I think I probably did. I immediately washed my hands but I am worried. What should I do?

A. You were right to wash your hands. Because of the close contact you are more at risk than others. If anyone touched a Marburg patient he/she should immediately wash their hands with soap and water. As you have had contact with a patient you must alert a health unit so that your health can be monitored. Daily monitoring for fever and headache, muscle pain, diarrhoea, vomiting blood etc should be done for 21 days.

Q9. How are Marburg patients taken care of in the health units and hospitals?

A. The patients are put under intensive care and are given the best chance to survive. Doctors and nurses make sure the patients receive lots of fluids to help them get stronger.
Though there is no specific treatment for Marburg, hundreds of people have survived the disease in the past. With high levels of care in hospitals, patients are more likely to survive. This is why it is so important that anyone suspected to have the disease is taken to the nearest health facility as soon as possible.

**Q10. Where are the patients who have recovered being kept?**

A. Patients who have completely recovered are sent back to their home because they are no longer a risk to the community. They are advised to abstain from sex or not to have unprotected sex for 3 months.

**Q11. Is anything being done to protect school pupils and teachers from Marburg?**

A. Yes, school pupils, students and teachers are being protected through health education and sensitization. The authorities will continue to monitor the situation in schools and other learning institutions.

**Q12. Can the disease spread through sharing cups and other eating utensils with a Marburg patient?**

A. Yes. If you know someone has Marburg there should be no contact with them. The cups and utensils used by the Marburg patients should be properly washed and disinfected in Jik.

**Q13. How can young children be protected from Marburg?**

A. The easiest way to protect young children from Marburg is to ensure that they do not have contact with the Marburg patients.

**Q14. Is it safe to have many people sleeping closely together in one household?**

A. Yes. As long as everyone is healthy and there is no risk of getting Marburg. However, if someone gets ill and you suspect Marburg, then alert the nearest health unit immediately. However, over crowding can cause other health problems such as pneumonia and should be limited as much as possible.

**Q15. Do we have to eat only hot food to protect ourselves against Marburg?**

A. No. there is no risk of Marburg from food. It can only be transmitted through bodily contact or contact with bodily foods of a sick patient or the body of someone who has died from the disease. But boiling drinking water and food can help you avoid other infections such as cholera or dysentery.

**Q16. Do people ever recover from Marburg?**

A. Yes. Hundreds of people have recovered from previous outbreaks of Marburg. People suspected to have contracted the disease if taken to hospital quickly have a far greater chance of survival. Every effort must be made to get sick people to hospital.