



Health, Healthy Living and Seniors

Public Health and Primary Health Care Division
Communicable Disease Control
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Dear Health Care Provider:

Health Alert: Ebola virus outbreak, Western Africa

We are alerting health care providers in Manitoba of the ongoing Ebola virus disease (EVD) outbreak occurring in Western Africa. This is the largest outbreak of EVD recorded since the disease was first described in 1976. While the risk to most travellers is considered low, healthcare workers should be vigilant for persons with symptoms compatible with EVD and who have returned from affected countries within 21 days of symptom onset. **Suspected cases of EVD must be reviewed with an Infectious Diseases specialist. The Infectious Disease service can be reached 24/7 at (204) 787-2071.**

Affected countries:

As of **August 4, 2014**, there have been 1,711 cases and 932 deaths reported to the World Health Organization by the Ministries of Health in *Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria* and *Sierra Leone*, and additional cases are expected. Cases have been reported in Aid workers from the US who had been providing care to EVD cases in the affected area.

Ebola virus disease:

EVD is a severe disease that causes *haemorrhagic fever* in humans and animals. Viral diseases that cause haemorrhagic fevers, such as Ebola, are often fatal as they affect the body's vascular system and can lead to significant internal bleeding and organ failure. Symptoms consist of a sudden onset of fever, malaise, muscle aches, headache, pink or red eye, pharyngitis, vomiting, diarrhea that can be bloody, and impaired kidney and liver function. It is spread through contact with infected animals, contact with blood, body fluids or tissues of infected persons, or contact with medical equipment that is contaminated with infected body fluids. The incubation period ranges from 2 up to a maximum of 21 days, and people are only contagious once they begin to show symptoms. Treatment is supportive.

Infection Prevention and Control:

Strict infection prevention and control practices should be implemented for any suspected case of EVD. In addition to Routine Practices, health care workers caring for patients with suspected or confirmed EVD must apply **Droplet/Contact Precautions plus precautions for aerosols during Aerosol Generating Medical Procedures (AGMPs)**. Please see **Manitoba Health Routine Practices and Additional Precautions: Preventing the Transmission of Infection in Health Care** <http://www.gov.mb.ca/health/publichealth/cdc/docs/ipc/rpap.pdf>

Testing:

A risk assessment must be completed by an Infectious Diseases specialist who will, if the clinical presentation and epidemiology is consistent with EVD, notify the Medical Officer of Health at (204)788-8666 and Cadham Provincial Laboratory to initiate appropriate specimen collection and testing. Laboratory workers are also at risk. Samples

taken from suspected Ebola cases for diagnosis should be handled by trained staff and processed in specially equipped laboratories.

Information on Ebola virus disease, including symptoms, prevention, and treatment is available at: <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/id-mi/vhf-fvh/ebola-eng.php>.

More information on the outbreaks can be found on the World Health Organization's Global Alert and Response website: <http://www.who.int/csr/don/archive/disease/ebola/en/>.

Sincerely,

“Original Signed By”

Tim Hilderman, MD FRCPC
Medical Lead, Communicable Disease Control