

Ebola Virus Disease

What is Ebola Virus Disease?

Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) is a severe illness caused by the Ebola virus. EVD is one of a number of viral hemorrhagic fevers that can affect humans and other primates. According to the World Health Organization, on average, around 50% of people who become infected with Ebola virus will die.

What are the signs and symptoms of EVD?

It can take between two and 21 days from the time EVD gets into the body before symptoms start to show. EVD begins with a sudden onset of fever, weakness, muscle pain, sore throat and headache. These symptoms may be followed by vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, rash and bleeding, or bruising.

How is EVD spread?

EVD is spread through direct contact with the blood, vomit, diarrhea or body fluids (sweat, breast milk, saliva) of an infected person. EVD can also be spread through semen for several weeks after recovery. It may also be spread by touching or by being exposed to surfaces or objects that have been contaminated with an infected person's body fluids. A person infected with Ebola virus cannot spread the virus to others before symptoms appear.

Who is at risk of getting sick with EVD?

For most people, the risk of EVD is very low. Family members, health care workers or others who have come in close contact with people who are ill or have died of EVD are at greater risk of becoming infected. Travelers to parts of the world where EVD is known to be circulating are at greater risk if they have had direct contact with a person identified or suspected of having EVD.

What is the treatment for Ebola?

Currently, there is no effective approved treatment for EVD. Two vaccines are currently undergoing human safety testing.

Do people who have traveled from countries where EVD is identified have to be quarantined when they arrive in Canada?

Quarantine is not recommended for people who have returned, or are visiting, from countries where EVD has been identified. As EVD becomes contagious only once symptoms are present, returning travelers, or people from countries where EVD has been identified, should watch for signs and symptoms of illness for 21 days after entering Canada. In general however, people who have been in affected countries, but have not had any direct contact with people who were ill with EVD, are at low risk for becoming sick themselves.

When should I seek medical care?

If you develop signs and/or symptoms of EVD, and you have traveled to a country where EVD is known to be present and/or have been in contact with a person who was known or suspected to have EVD within the last 21 days, stay home and call the Middlesex London Health Unit at 519-663-5317 ext. 2330 Monday to Friday 8:30am-4:30pm, after 4:30 pm and on weekends and holidays select option 2. If you need immediate medical attention call 9-1-1 and inform them of your travel history or possible exposure to the virus and symptoms.

Prevention

- **Infection Control Practices:** It is important for health care providers to make sure that the correct personal protective equipment and infection control practices are being used when taking care of a person suspected or confirmed of having EVD. Additional information can be found at:
<http://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/BrowseByTopic/InfectiousDiseases/Pages/Viral-Hemorrhagic-Fevers.aspx>
- **Travel Health Notices-** The Public Health Agency of Canada issues travel health notices to inform travelers about situations or conditions in other countries and advises travelers of health measures to take when travelling in order to stay safe and healthy. If you are planning a trip to another country, check current travel health notices through the Public Health Agency of Canada at: <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/tmp-pmv/notices-avis/index-eng.php>. Travelers should be reminded to avoid direct contact with a person who is infected with EVD, and to avoid handling any animals suspected of having EVD.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Infectious Disease Control Team at 519-663-5317 ext. 2330 or go to www.healthunit.com

References:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2016). Ebola Hemorrhagic Fever. Retrieved August 13, 2014 from <http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/outbreaks/guinea/index.html>

Ministry of Health and Long Term Care (May 2014) Infectious Disease Protocol Appendix A: Chapter: Hemorrhagic fevers caused by: i) Ebola virus and ii) Marburg virus and iii) Other viral causes including bunyaviruses, arenaviruses and flaviviruses. , retrieved on January 7, 2016 from http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/oph_standards/docs/hemorrhagic_fevers_chapter.pdf

World health Organization (2015). Ebola virus disease. Retrieved January 7, 2016 from <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs103/en/>

Revised January 7, 2016