



## FAST FACTS

# Ebola Virus Disease - Staying Healthy and Safe at Work!

This PSHSA Fast Fact summarizes general information about Ebola and precautions to help support prevention efforts in healthcare settings.

### What is Ebola Virus Disease?

Ebola Virus Disease is an acute life-threatening illness caused by subtypes of the Ebola virus that are known to affect humans and primates such as monkeys, chimpanzees, and gorillas. Infection is characterized by fever, headache, muscle pain, intense weakness, cough, stomach pain, vomiting and diarrhea. As the virus multiplies, more severe symptoms such as profound bleeding and multi-organ failure manifest. The time between exposure to the virus and the appearance of symptoms ranges from 2 to 21 days. After the onset of symptoms, a person with Ebola is contagious and can spread the virus to others.

### Who is at Risk?

The threat of contracting Ebola Virus Disease is higher in countries where outbreaks are reported. The risk of infection is especially high for individuals, such as health care workers, who are in close physical contact with infected persons or animals.

### How might I be exposed?

Ebola is not considered an airborne virus. Transmission among humans occurs primarily through:

1. Direct contact with virus-containing blood, body fluids, droplets or tissue of infected persons, animals and cadavers
2. Indirect contact with contaminated objects or surfaces.

### What should workers do to protect themselves?

Although no vaccine or drug therapy is available to prevent or treat Ebola Virus Disease, you can

protect yourself and others by staying informed and adhering to infection control practices outlined in your organization's policies and relevant government and expert authority resources.

#### Take steps to minimize the risk of being exposed and to control the spread of infection.

1. Always follow Routine Practices which includes frequent hand hygiene
2. Be alert to symptoms of disease like sudden fever, headache, malaise, vomiting and diarrhea, and bleeding
3. Initiate Contact and Droplet Precautions including the use of fluid-resistant gloves, long-sleeved cuffed gowns, surgical masks, and full face shield "before entering" single room (closed door), dedicated bathroom, and the use of the care area of a suspected or infected person
4. Wear a fit-tested and seal-checked N95 respirator for aerosol generating procedures
5. Ensure training is received in the proper use and removal of personal protective equipment to prevent contaminating yourself and/or the work environment
6. Clean and disinfect work environment with an approved hospital-grade disinfectant and undertake appropriate reprocessing of care items and medical equipment.
7. Dispose biomedical waste in accordance with Ministry of Environment guidelines
8. Satisfy responsibilities under the Occupational Health and Safety Act and its Regulations

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**What to do if I experience symptoms?**

Early identification, reporting and supportive care for Ebola Virus Disease is essential.

**If you suspect unprotected exposure but have no symptoms, you should:**

1. Notify your employer for medical and post-exposure follow-up
2. Monitor for fever twice daily for 21 days

**If you develop viral symptoms, you should:**

1. Stay home from work
2. Seek prompt medical attention to help confirm diagnosis
3. Notify your manager so necessary corrective action and reporting can be taken
4. Comply with established post-exposure protocols



**All suspect cases need to be reported to your local health unit and the PHO Laboratory.**

**Where can I find more information?**

To learn more about Ebola Virus Disease and access updated guidance documents visit the following webpage links:

**Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care**

<http://health.gov.on.ca/en/public/programs/emu/ebola/>

**Public Health Ontario**

[http://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/BrowseByTopic/InfectiousDiseases/Pages/Viral-Hemorrhagic-Fevers.aspx#.U\\_JRMvldU\\_5](http://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/BrowseByTopic/InfectiousDiseases/Pages/Viral-Hemorrhagic-Fevers.aspx#.U_JRMvldU_5)

**Public Health Agency of Canada**

<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/id-mi/vhf-fvh/ebola-eng.php>

**US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**

<http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/index.html>

**World Health Organization**

<http://www.who.int/csr/disease/ebola/en/>