

October 26, 2022

This memo is intended for acute care, urgent care, community and primary care settings, and health authority infection prevention and control, public health, and workplace health and safety programs.

Subject: Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) - Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations

Background

In collaboration with other provincial and federal partners, the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) outbreak in Uganda is being closely monitored. The outbreak is caused by the Sudan ebolavirus strain, for which no vaccines or pharmaceuticals are currently licensed¹.

As of October 23, 2022, and according to the Uganda Ministry of Health, there have been 90 confirmed cases including 28 deaths. To date, no probable or confirmed EVD cases related to this outbreak have been reported in countries outside of Uganda. The risk of spread internationally at this time has been assessed as low by the World Health Organization.

The risk for EVD in British Columbia is low. Canada has no direct flights from Uganda, and the volume of travellers arriving indirectly from Uganda is low. Enhanced screening measures are in place at Canada's port of entry to help identify any travellers returning to Canada who may be ill, and to raise awareness among travellers about what they should do if they become sick.

Clinicians are reminded to obtain a detailed travel history from patients with febrile illness after travel to determine if they may have been in affected areas of Uganda and if EVD is suspected. In the early stages, the diagnosis may be difficult as the disease can mimic other more common infectious diseases such as malaria, typhoid fever, or meningitis¹.

Testing:

Ensure testing for malaria is conducted for any febrile traveler that has recently arrived from Uganda recognizing that malaria can progress rapidly.

- Testing for Sudan ebolavirus is currently provided to British Columbia through the National Microbiology Laboratory and local testing capacity is being developed.
- BCCDC Public Health Laboratory (PHL) is equipped to provide STAT malaria testing for patients at high suspicion for EVD.

Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) Measures:

As a precaution, the Provincial Infection Control Network (PICNet) is recommending infection prevention and control (IPC) measures for any patient who presents for health care and has signs, symptoms, and risk factors with suspicion for EVD. Appropriate IPC measures should be initiated **immediately**.

IPC recommendations for patients suspected or confirmed to have EVD:

- Have the patient wear a medical mask, if tolerated, and perform hand hygiene.
- Health care workers: Undertake a risk assessment to determine the level of transmission risk.

IPC recommendations for health care workers providing care to patients suspected or confirmed to have EVD:

- Ensure that health care workers are trained in donning and doffing of EVD response PPE.
- Undertake a risk assessment to determine the level of transmission risk
- In addition to routine IPC practices, follow additional IPC measures (e.g., cleaning and disinfection and waste management) and PPE recommendations based on low and high-risk scenarios.
 - Refer to the [British Columbia Ebola Guidance](#), including [Personal Protective Equipment Guidelines](#).
- Follow institutional procedures established for high threat pathogens including Ebola.
- In health authority-operated sites, follow local institutional training and established procedures for management of patients with suspected or confirmed Ebola. Provincial online educational resource for infection control precautions for high threat pathogens are available on the [PICNet website](#).
- Consult IPC in health authority-operated sites and public health in community, as well as organizational guidelines regarding patient placement, management, and discontinuation of additional precautions.
- Where aerosol-generating medical procedures (AGMPs) are medically necessary, adhere to IPC and workplace health and safety guidelines for AGMPs, including airborne, droplet, and contact precautions.

Notification of Public Health, Infection Prevention and Control, and Workplace Health and Safety

Notify Public Health, Infection Prevention and Control, and Workplace Health and Safety immediately and directly of suspected and confirmed cases of EVD. Cases of suspected EVD are reportable under the [Reporting Information Affecting Public Health Regulation](#) of the *Public Health Act*.

- Follow health authority procedures for notification and engagement of additional partners for safe provision of care (e.g., BC Biocontainment Leadership).
- The health care provider should **immediately** notify their local medical microbiologist on call (for health authority-operated sites) and the local medical health officer on call, who will then notify the BCCDC PHL medical microbiologist on call for review of risk factors.
- If suspicion remains high following the initial consultation, a broader discussion including the Provincial Health Officer, for further assessment of risk factors and need for Ebola virus testing will be convened.
- If it is determined that EVD testing is warranted, the BCCDC PHL medical microbiologist on call will initiate the Emergency Response Action Plan (ERAP) response for patient samples sent out for testing.

For more information, please see:

- For information about Travel Health Notices related to this Ebola outbreak, refer to the [Government of Canada's Ebola Disease in Uganda](#) website
- BCCDC [Ebola Information for Professionals](#)
- For additional Ebola guidance, refer to the [Office of the Provincial Health Officer's Ebola](#) website
 - [Primary Care Centre Arrival Algorithm](#)
 - [Emergency Department Ebola Virus Disease \(EVD\) Risk Assessment Algorithm](#)

Regional Public Health Contact Information (for health professionals only)

- Fraser Health:
 - Business hours: 1-866-990-9941
 - After business hours: 604-527-4806
- Interior Health: 1-866-457-5648
- Island Health
 - South Island: 1-866-665-6626
 - Central Island: 1-866-770-7798
 - North Island: 1-877-887-8835
- Northern Health:
 - Business hours: 250-645-3794
 - After business hours: 250-565-2000, press 7, ask for the MHO on call
- Vancouver Coastal Health:
 - Business hours: 1-855-675-3900
 - After business hours: 604-527-4893
- BCCDC Medical Microbiologist on call: 604-661-7033
- BCCDC Physician Epidemiologist: 604-875-2161
- Biocontainment Treatment Center Physician on-call
 - Accessed through FHA switchboard 604-581-2211, or FHA on call scheduling system online under 'Infectious Diseases – SMH Biocontainment Unit'

Regional Health Authority Information:

- Contact switchboard or similar in your health authority to reach Infection Prevention and Control and Medical Microbiologist on call.

References

1. World Health Organization (WHO). Ebola Disease caused by Sudan virus – Uganda. Published 2022. Accessed October 14, 2022. <https://www.who.int/emergencies/disease-outbreak-news/item/2022-DON410>