

# Ebola Virus Disease:

## Information Sheet for Patients and Families

### What is Ebola?

Ebola is a deadly virus that causes bleeding inside and outside the body. It is often, but not always, fatal. Some people will recover.

West Africa is currently experiencing an outbreak of the Ebola virus. Although the chance of an outbreak in Canada is unlikely, it is possible that a person could become infected in West Africa and bring that infection with them back to Canada.

### What are the symptoms of Ebola?

Early on, Ebola can feel like the flu or other illnesses. Symptoms show up 2 to 21 days after being exposed to Ebola. You are not able to spread Ebola infection to others before symptoms start.

#### ***Symptoms usually include:***

- High fever
- Headache
- Joint and muscle aches
- Sore throat
- Weakness
- Stomach pain
- Vomiting/diarrhea
- Lack of appetite

### What special precautions could I be a part of?

Ebola is contagious and life-threatening. There's no vaccine to prevent Ebola. Because it is sometimes hard to tell if a person has Ebola from the symptoms alone, we are taking all precautions. You will be asked about your travel history in the past 21 days. If you have Ebola symptoms and/

or have travelled to West Africa in the past 21 days, your health care team may:

- Care for you in a single patient room (with a private bathroom) and keep the door to your room closed
- Put a sign on the door to tell other health care providers to take special precautions
- Keep a list of everyone who goes in and out of your room each day
- Keep everything used for your care inside your room (for example equipment and supplies)
- Make sure everyone (even family members) that enter your room will wear at least:
  - Gloves
  - Waterproof gown
  - Face shield
  - Facemask
  - Hair cover
  - Shoe covers
- ▶ All of these items are disposable (one time use only) and must be removed every time someone leaves your room.
- ▶ Staff will help your family and visitors to put these things on properly and remove them safely.

These special precautions, if thought necessary, would be in place until blood tests confirm that you do not have Ebola.



**The most important thing you can do to prevent the spread of infection is to clean your hands**

**Symptoms show up 2 to 21 days after being exposed to Ebola.**

*continued...*

## Should I worry if there is a patient in the hospital with Ebola at the same time as I or my child are admitted for another health problem?

No. Very careful Infection Control measures have been put in place to ensure that this infection cannot spread to patients, relatives, visitors or healthcare workers.

## What can I do to stay healthy?

The most important thing you can do to prevent the spread of infection is to wash your hands frequently or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.



- Avoid contact with blood and body fluids of any person, particularly someone who is sick.

## What can I do to protect others?

- Tell medical providers if you have been to Africa within the last 21 days.
- Seek medical care immediately if you develop fever (temperature of 101.5°F/ 38.6°C) and any of the other following symptoms: headache, muscle pain, diarrhea, vomiting, stomach pain, or unexplained bruising or bleeding.
- Limit your contact with other people until you go to the doctor. Do not travel anywhere else besides a healthcare facility.
- A public health representative may give your family members/visitors specific direction on when they should stay home and when they should go to a healthcare facility for an Ebola test.

This information sheet has been provided by the Infection Prevention and Control Service, Provincial Health Services Authority. If you have questions about Ebola contact your doctor or ask to speak to an Infection Control Practitioner.