



## HOMES AND SENIORS SERVICES

### **POLICY & PROCEDURE NUMBER: 4.36**

**DEPARTMENT:** *Infection Control*

**SUBJECT:** *Viral Haemorrhage Fevers (VHF)  
(e.g. Ebola)*

**APPROVAL DATE:**

**REVISION DATE:** March 2016; Nov. 2022

**REVIEW DATE:** March 2017; Nov 2018; Dec 2019; Dec. 2020

**Page 1 of 2**

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### **POLICY:**

Viral haemorrhagic fevers (VHFs) refer to a group of illnesses that are caused by several distinct families of viruses. In general, the term “viral haemorrhagic fever” is used to describe a severe multisystem syndrome. Symptoms are often accompanied by haemorrhage. While some types of haemorrhagic fever viruses can cause relatively mild illness, many of these viruses cause severe, life-threatening disease. Some viruses that are known to cause VHF can spread from one person to another once someone has become infected. (E.g., Ebola, Marburg, Lassa and Crimean-Congo viruses).

The risk of VHF in Canada is low. VHFs are not endemic in Canada and no cases have occurred in Ontario. International travel has the potential to expose persons to a number of travel-associated diseases including VHF.

In the event of importation, threat of importation, or transmission of a VHF agent in Ontario, the Ministry of Health will establish enhanced standards through policy or directives that will guide the screening, identification and care of potential cases.

The 2014-2016 Ebola virus disease (EVD) outbreak in West Africa was the largest and most complex in history. The World Health Organization continues to track VHF and provides updates to the world on any new cases or outbreaks.

### **PROCEDURE:**

#### Clinical Signs and Symptoms- Ebola

Ebola Virus Disease has an incubation period of 21 days. It is important to note that an infected individual is NOT contagious during this period. Current knowledge indicates they are only contagious when symptoms are present.

Initial symptoms are vague and may include sudden onset of:

- Fever/chills
- Headache/sore throat
- Muscle/joint/abdominal pain
- Vomiting/diarrhea



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**Page 2 of 2**

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4-5 days after onset, hemorrhagic symptoms begin:

- Hemorrhagic conjunctivitis
- Bleeding gums/nose
- Melena/hematuria/vaginal bleeding

### **Clinical Implication**

The risk to most is considered low; however, we should be vigilant for persons with recent travel and symptoms compatible with EVD. During initial patient assessment, look for signs and symptoms compatible with EVD and a recent travel history from affected areas, having returned within 21 days of symptom onset. Strict infection control practices shall always be implemented for any suspected or probably communicable disease including EVD.

PHO [Guide to Infection Prevention and Control \(IPAC\) Management of Suspected or Confirmed Viral Haemorrhagic Fever \(VHF\) in Acute Care, July 2019](https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/Documents/G/2019/guidance-vhf-ontario.pdf?sc_lang=en) available at:  
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