

RESOURCES AVAILABLE FOR EBOLA READINESS

Update to York Region health care providers as of July 22, 2019

An ongoing outbreak of Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has recently involved Goma (a very populated part of DRC close to the border of Rwanda). Global risk currently remains low, but there are several Canadians working with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the affected areas. This communication provides information on updated EVD guidelines, laboratory testing and educational webinars to help your health care organization stay prepared in the unlikely event of an EVD case in York Region.

Current status

- The World Health Organization recently declared the Ebola crisis in the DRC as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern
- There have been no cases of EVD in Canada
- Risk to York Region residents is very low
- Returning workers from NGOs are advised by public health to do the following:
 - Notify their local public health unit upon their return and remain close to hospitals during the 21-day period immediately following their return to Canada.
 - Monitor for signs and symptoms of illness and record oral temperature twice per day
 - Seek medical attention immediately in the event symptoms signs or symptoms of illness occur and advise paramedic services and the attending health care provider of recent travel to DRC.
- Research on experimental vaccines is ongoing

Role of York Region Clinicians – what can you do?

- Be aware of the updated guidelines from Public Health Ontario (link below), which provides guidance for infection prevention and control management of individuals with a suspected or confirmed diagnosis of viral hemorrhagic fever, including EVD
- Immediately report any individuals with suspect signs and symptoms of Ebola to York Region Public Health at 1-877-464-9675 ext. 73588
 - It is important this reporting is done immediately as Public Health must arrange for transportation of symptomatic clients by paramedic services equipped with the appropriate infection prevention and control capacity
 - Public Health needs to be informed before specimens are collected (as specimens can only be handled and transported by staff trained specifically in collection of these types of sensitive specimens)
- Ensure the following is in place in your practice setting:
 - Always ask about travel history when conducting patient evaluations. If it is identified that a patient has travelled to an Ebola affected area within the past 3 weeks, you should notify York Region Public Health at 1-877-464-9675 ext. 73588.
 - Screen clients walking through your door for symptoms of a communicable disease so that prompt infection prevention control measures are implemented to protect staff and other patients
 - Ensure you have adequate personal protective equipment (PPE) available

PUBLIC HEALTH

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Laboratory Testing

York Region Public Health will facilitate laboratory testing for any suspect cases, in partnership with local hospitals as trained personnel are required to collect the sample. As such, it is vital that health care providers suspecting EVD report to public health immediately to initiate this process.

Please visit the PHO website found below for laboratory guidance and process to request testing.

York Region Public Health can help

If you have any questions on EVD, contact York Region Public Health's Control of Infectious Diseases team at 1-877-464-9675 ext. 73588.

Resources

PHO Guide to Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) Management of Suspected or Confirmed Viral Haemorrhagic Fever (VHF) in Acute Care:

<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/guidance-vhf-ontario.pdf?la=en>

PHO – Viral Hemorrhagic Fevers:

<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/diseases-and-conditions/infectious-diseases/vector-borne-zoonotic-diseases/ebola>

The Ministry of Health EVD webinars:

<http://www.ontario.ca/ebola>

Connect to york.ca/healthprofessionals for insights on current public health topics, up-to-date information and resources from York Region Public Health's programs and services. Visit the **Announcements and Resources** page for our latest communications and to subscribe to our quarterly e-newsletter *Public Health Matters*, which covers topics relevant to today's health care professionals.