

EBOLA

Information for front line health professionals

Ebola is a virus that can cause a severe and often fatal haemorrhagic disease in humans. There is currently an ongoing outbreak of Ebola virus disease (Ebola) in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

The World Health Organization (WHO) recently declared the Ebola outbreak a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC).

The risk to Australia is very low and has not changed with the declaration of a PHEIC.

While Australia is very well prepared and the risk of importation to Australia is very low, front line health professionals should be alert to the possibility of Ebola in unwell travellers returning from the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

For a detailed list of currently affected areas refer to <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/ebola/drc-2019> remembering that the risk of spread within the country and to neighbouring countries is considered high.

If you suspect a case of Ebola obtain a full travel and exposure history.

EBOLA CAN SPREAD THROUGH

- **Direct exposure to bodily fluids** such as blood, saliva, breast milk, faeces, urine and sweat of an infected person or animal, alive or dead. Transmission of the Ebola virus can still occur via body secretions after clinical recovery
- **Close contact with infected patients**
- **Having unprotected sexual contact** with infected people up to 12 months after they have recovered
- **Participating in traditional burial ceremonies** in some areas of Africa
- **Hunting, handling or eating of 'bushmeat'** in some areas of Africa

SYMPTOMS

The **incubation period for Ebola is 2 to 21 days**. Early symptoms include sudden onset of **fever, weakness, muscle pain, headache** and **sore throat**. Later symptoms include **vomiting and diarrhoea, confusion, bruising, a rash, cough** and **collapse**. In some cases it can affect liver and kidney functions and cause **internal and external bleeding**.

IF YOU SUSPECT YOUR PATIENT MAY HAVE EBOLA

- **Isolate** the patient and **restrict entry** to the isolation room
- **Immediately notify** the Infection Control service and the hospital executive for your hospital and follow their directions
- **Urgently notify** by phone your local public health unit/CDC with information on symptoms, illness onset, travel dates and travel activities/locations

For further information and updates

Check www.health.gov.au/ebola