



Ebola Virus Disease

Existing emergency infectious disease plans at EMHS member organizations outline the special steps necessary in case of any viral outbreak. The plan is modified and updated in light of the unique challenges that a virus like Ebola may present. As a system, EMHS has adopted the federal Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines for Ebola. You can learn more about these guidelines at www.cdc.gov. We are working with Maine CDC and closely monitoring any changes in recommendations. Additionally, EMHS is updating procedures and protocols related to care delivery to patients with infectious diseases. This includes many levels of care, both clinical and nonclinical. Procedures and policies may include screenings, isolation, transport, laboratory testing, imaging, cleaning, and waste removal.

What you need to know

What is the Ebola Virus Disease?

CDC defines Ebola, previously known as Ebola hemorrhagic fever, as a rare and deadly disease caused by infection with a virus of the family *Filoviridae*, genus *Ebolavirus*. The first Ebola species was discovered near the Ebola River in Africa.

How is it transmitted?

You can get Ebola from:

- Touching the blood or body fluids of a person who is sick with or has died from Ebola
- Touching contaminated objects, like needles
- Touching infected animals, their blood or other body fluids, or their meat

Is there a risk in Maine?

- There have been **no** reported cases of Ebola in Maine.
- People in Maine are at very low risk of contracting Ebola. At this time no one has presented at any EMHS facility with symptoms or travel history that match the screening criteria for Ebola.
- EMHS facilities are diligently adhering to patient screening guidelines. For example, all patients are being asked about any recent travel to countries where the Ebola outbreak is occurring.

What can I do to stay safe?

There is a greater risk of influenza (flu) than any other infectious disease, including Ebola. The number one thing you can do right now is make sure that you and your family all receive flu shots.

Following these precautions are smart ways to avoid the spread of illness and infection:

- Wash your hands frequently or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Cough and sneeze into your elbow or shoulder
- Stay home when you feel sick

How are EMHS and Its Members Responding?

EMHS' general infectious disease plan outlines the special steps needed in case of any viral outbreak. That plan has been modified to handle the unique challenges that a virus like Ebola may present. The plan includes protocols for patient screening, care, and transportation, as well as handling waste and contaminated personal belongings. Because Bangor International Airport is a refueling stop for many transatlantic flights, including where the Ebola outbreak is occurring, EMHS is working closely with airport officials and others to ensure that a solid plan is in place should the need arise.

Planning for a potential crisis takes multiple levels of coordination, including hospital-based planning, system-based planning, and regional-based planning. By working closely together, EMHS member organizations have focused planning efforts in areas of communication, prevention, and containment, as well as hospital response and patient care.

Resources

CDC <http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/about.html>

Maine CDC <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/infectious-disease/epi/zoonotic/ebola.shtml>