

Viral Hemorrhagic Fevers: Infection Prevention Recommendations for Health Care Facilities

About Viral hemorrhagic fevers (VHF)

Viral hemorrhagic fevers is the name given to the diseases caused by a group of viruses such as Ebola, Crimean-Congo, Lassa, and Marburg viruses. Although not endemic to the United States, outbreaks of these diseases in other countries may pose a risk to Wisconsin travelers. During an outbreak of VHF, rapid identification and appropriate infection prevention and control are crucial to limiting disease spread.



Preparing for VHF in your facility

During a VHF outbreak, all health care providers and facilities should be prepared to encounter a patient who has traveled to an affected area. The Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) recommends all facilities:

- ✓ Remain up to date with all CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) and public health outbreak notification.
- ✓ Stay connected with local and Tribal health departments (LTHDs) and local emergency medical services providers.
- ✓ Review plans and policies for employee health, clinical care of a suspected VHF patient, and communication.
- ✓ Update travel and symptom triage questions.
- ✓ Identify locations within the facility for patient care.
- ✓ Identify staff who will care for the patient.
- ✓ Ensure the facility has all appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) available for the care of a suspected VHF patient.

Health care workers caring for patients with suspected VHF must:



Receive comprehensive training and demonstrate competency in using PPE.



Wear PPE that covers clothing and skin and completely protects mucous membranes.



Be supervised by an on-site manager at all times, especially during donning and doffing procedure to ensure PPE protocols are done correctly.



Patient Care

- ✓ Place patient in single room with private bathroom and keep door closed.
- ✓ Maintain a log of all health care workers who enter the patient's room.
- ✓ Use dedicated and disposable medical equipment.
- ✓ Minimize exposure to health care workers by limiting the use of needles and sharps, following safe injection practices, and avoiding aerosol generating procedures when possible.
- ✓ Always wear appropriate PPE during every patient interaction.



Environmental infection prevention

- ✓ Ensure environmental services (EVS) staff wear all appropriate PPE during environmental cleaning and disinfection activities.
- ✓ Use a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-registered disinfectant from List L or List Q to disinfect environmental surfaces in patient rooms.
- ✓ Avoid contamination of reusable, porous surfaces.
- ✓ Dispose of all linens, non-fluid-impermeable pillows or mattresses, and cloth privacy curtains.
- ✓ Follow appropriate waste disposal for hazardous material.

Resources for facilities

[CDC: Clinical Screening and Diagnosis for VHFs](#)

[CDC: Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Patients in U.S. Hospitals who are Suspected or Confirmed to have Selected Viral Hemorrhagic Fevers](#)

[CDC: Guidance for Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\)](#)

[CDC: Interim Guidance for Environmental Infection Control in Hospitals](#)

Contact us

If you have questions about infection prevention and control for VHF, please email the DHS Healthcare-associated Infection Prevention Program at DHSWIHAIPreventionProgram@dhs.wisconsin.gov.

An on-call epidemiologist in the DHS Bureau of Communicable Diseases can be reached 8 a.m.–4 p.m. at 608-267-9003 and during non-business hours at the DHS 24/7 emergency line at 800-943-0003 (option 4) or 608-258-0099.

