

Guide for Clinicians Evaluating a Patient for a Viral Hemorrhagic Fever in Wisconsin

Ill person presents to a Wisconsin health care facility:

Screening questions for a viral hemorrhagic fever (VHF) (Ebola, Marburg, Lassa, Crimean-Congo Hemorrhagic Fever)

1. **(Identify)** Within the incubation period of a special pathogen, has the patient:

- Been in contact with a person who had a suspected or confirmed infection with a special pathogen or any object contaminated by their body fluids?
- Had recent travel to an area with an active outbreak of a disease caused by a special pathogen, or where special pathogens are endemic?
- Worked in a laboratory that handles special pathogens?

If patient answers yes to one or more screening questions above, proceed to 2.

If patient answers no to all screening questions, proceed to 3.

2. **(Identify)** Is patient experiencing fever ($\geq 100.4^{\circ}\text{F}/38.0^{\circ}\text{C}$) without use of antipyretics and any of the following symptoms?

- Severe headache
- Muscle and/or joint pain
- Weakness and fatigue
- Cough/difficulty breathing
- Sore throat
- Loss of appetite
- Gastrointestinal symptoms, including abdominal pain, diarrhea, and vomiting
- Chest pain
- Encephalitis
- Acute hearing loss
- Unexplained bleeding or bruising, including bleeding outside a normal menstrual cycle
- Red eyes, skin rash, and hiccups
- A concerning constellation of other signs and symptoms

If yes, proceed to 4.

If no, proceed to 5.

3. **(Identify)** Patient answers **NO** to all screening questions in section 1:

Continue with routine evaluation and care. If concern remains, consult the patient's [Local or Tribal Health Department \(LTHD\)](#).

4. **(Isolate and Inform)** If the patient meets risk and symptom criteria in section 2, suspect potential VHF; immediately:

- **Isolate** patient at a health care facility in a single room with private bathroom/covered bedside commode.
- Adhere to **strict** [infection prevention and control \(IPC\)](#) procedures to prevent transmission, including wearing appropriate personal protective equipment.
- Use only essential health care workers trained in their designated roles and keep a log of all people entering the patient's room.
- **Inform:** Notify facility's IPC program and Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) 24/7 answering service **608-258-0099**. Notification will be made to patient's and facility's LTHD(s).

5. The patient is not exhibiting signs and symptoms compatible with a special pathogen:

- Continue with routine evaluation and care.
- If concern remains, consult the patient's LTHD in Wisconsin. If you are unable to reach the LTHD, or if the patient is not a Wisconsin resident, contact the Wisconsin DHS at 608-267-9003 or 24/7 at 608-258-0099.

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Contact the Wisconsin DHS for testing recommendations and guidance

Assessing epidemiological risk

Did the patient:

- ☐ Receive pre-travel vaccinations?
- ☐ Adhere to their malaria prophylaxis regimen if they traveled to a malaria-endemic country?
- ☐ Report any illness or death in travel companions or other contacts?

Preceding illness onset, did the patient:

- ☐ Have contact with someone who was sick or died, or with any object(s) contaminated by their body fluids?
- ☐ Work in a health care facility in an area with an active outbreak of a special pathogen, or where these pathogens are endemic?
- ☐ Experience a breach in IPC precautions that may have resulted in contact with the body fluids of a patient with suspected or confirmed disease due to a special pathogen?
- ☐ Have contact with the body fluids of a person who recovered from a disease due to a special pathogen – urine, saliva, sweat, vomit, breast milk, amniotic fluid, or semen?
- ☐ Attend or participate in funeral rituals, including the preparation of bodies for funeral/burial?

Preceding illness onset, did the patient:

- ☐ Visit a health care facility or traditional healer (as a visitor or patient) while in an area with an active outbreak of a special pathogen, or where these pathogens are endemic?
- ☐ Have contact with bats, pigs, rodents, camels, or other livestock or wild animals in an area with an active outbreak of a special pathogen, or where these pathogens are endemic?
- ☐ Handle or consume raw meat or other products harvested from animals originating from an area with an active outbreak of a special pathogen, or where these pathogens are endemic?
- ☐ Receive a tick bite in an area with an active outbreak of a special pathogen, or where these pathogens are endemic?
- ☐ Consume raw date palm sap originating from an area with an active outbreak of a special pathogen, or where these pathogens are endemic?
- ☐ Work or spend time in a mine/cave in an area with an active outbreak of a special pathogen, or where these pathogens are endemic?

As a resource for state, Tribal, local, or territorial public health departments, CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) is available 24/7 for consultation: 770-488-7100

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Testing

Decision is made to test for a special pathogen with the approval of DHS

- **Test for other causes of illness[†]**
- **Determine if patient requires transfer to a higher tier facility[†]**
 - Perform routine laboratory testing to monitor the patient's clinical status. Refer to [CDC guidelines for safe clinical testing for additional labs](#).[†]
 - Use lab equipment with closed tube systems where the specimen container remains capped during testing. Centrifuges should have sealed buckets or sealed rotors that are loaded in a biosafety cabinet (BSC). After centrifugation, open the sealed buckets or rotors inside a BSC or enclosed hood.
 - Malaria is the leading cause of travel-related hospitalization and death. Perform malaria testing in any patient with a febrile illness who recently returned from a malaria-endemic country, even if they took malaria prophylaxis.
 - Decisions about testing for a VHF will be coordinated by DHS in consultation with CDC. For VHFs, testing is only available at CDC or select laboratories within the Laboratory Response Network, including the Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene.

Decision is made not to test for a special pathogen

- Follow-up public health consultation is recommended to review the patient's clinical status and laboratory test results and to discuss discontinuation of VHF-specific IPC measures.

Guidance and other resources:

WI Local & Tribal Health Departments: <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/lh-depts/counties/index.htm>

WI DHS Viral Hemorrhagic Fever resources: <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/disease/viral-hemorrhagic-fever.htm>

CDC Guidance for Routine Diagnostic Testing for Patients with Suspected VHFs: <https://www.cdc.gov/viral-hemorrhagic-fevers/php/laboratories/guidance-on-performing-routine-diagnostic-testing-for-patients-with-suspected-vhfs-or-other.html>

CDC Diagnoses for Consideration in a Returning Traveler with Fever (archived from 2018): <https://archive.cdc.gov/#/details?url=https://www.cdc.gov/vhf/abroad/diagnosis-considered-returning-traveler.html>

CDC Viral Hemorrhagic Fever: <https://www.cdc.gov/vhf/index.html>

CDC Infection Prevention Guidance: <https://www.cdc.gov/viral-hemorrhagic-fevers/hcp/infection-control/index.html>

NETEC Viral Hemorrhagic Fever Readiness Assessments: <https://netec.org/readiness-assessments/>



WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT
of HEALTH SERVICES

Division of Public Health
Bureau of Communicable Diseases
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Questions about viral hemorrhagic fever?

Visit our website at <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/disease/viral-hemorrhagic-fever.htm> for additional information.