

Important Health Notice

Information for Healthcare Professionals

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Marburg Viral Haemorrhagic Fever Outbreak in Northern Angola

Highlights:

- Information for healthcare providers about the outbreak of Marburg Viral Haemorrhagic Fever in Northern Angola
- Advice on diagnosing Marburg Viral Haemorrhagic Fever (VHF)
- Link to Ontario's VHF Contingency Plan (see page 2)

Dear Colleagues

From October 2004, an outbreak of Marburg Viral Haemorrhagic Fever (VHF), family Filoviridae, which includes Ebola virus, has been reported in Uige Province in Northern Angola. Confirmatory testing was conducted by the US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Special Pathogens Branch.

As of 9 April, 214 cases of Marburg VHF have been reported in Angola. Of these, 194 have died. Uige province remains the epicenter of the outbreak, accounting for almost 90% of the cases and deaths.

Approximately 75% of the reported cases occurred in children aged <5 years; cases also have occurred in adults, including healthcare workers. Predominant symptoms have included fever, hemorrhage, vomiting, cough, diarrhoea, and jaundice. The incubation period ranges from 3 to 9 days.

The World Health Organization (WHO) and international partners are working with the Ministry of Health in Angola in conducting an investigation and public health response to the outbreak. Outbreak control efforts are directed at providing technical support for case management, strengthening infection control in hospitals, improving surveillance and contact tracing, and educating local residents about the disease and its modes of transmission. Governments of countries neighboring Angola are addressing the issue of cross-border movement.

Information about the outbreak is insufficient at this time to determine the full extent of possibly affected areas. Updates are being posted regularly to the WHO website.

Diagnosis

Clinicians should consider a diagnosis of Marburg VHF only among febrile patients who, within 10 days before onset of fever have:

- 1) travelled in Angola;
- 2) had direct contact with blood, other body fluids, secretions, or excretions of a person or animal suspected of having VHF; **OR**,
- 3) worked in a laboratory or animal facility that handles hemorrhagic fever viruses.

The Public Health Agency of Canada advises that the risk of acquiring Marburg virus is extremely low in persons who **do not** meet these criteria. The cause of fever in persons who have travelled to areas where VHF is endemic is usually due to more common infectious diseases (e.g. malaria or typhoid fever).

Individuals working in healthcare settings should ensure correct use of infection control precautions and appropriate personal protective equipment to prevent splashes of blood or body fluids from reaching the eyes, nose or mouth. Direct contact with blood and body fluids, and needle sticks or other injuries that break the skin should be avoided.

The MOHLTC is monitoring the situation in Angola closely and will provide updates to Ontario healthcare providers if significant new information becomes available.

The **MOHLTC has a VHF Contingency Plan** that can be found at:

http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/providers/program/infectious/diseases/ic_vhf.html

Healthcare providers can also contact the **MOHLTC Providers Hotline at 1 800 212-2272**

Public Health Agency of Canada information about Marburg virus is available at:

http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/tmp-pmv/2005/marburg050408_e.html

CDC information about Marburg virus and VHF's:

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvrd/spb/mnpages/dispages/marburg.htm>

More specific information on **infection control** is available on the **CDC website:**

<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm54d330a1.html>

Additional information is available at the following link:

WHO information about the outbreak in Angola:
<http://www.who.int/en/>

Sincerely,

(original signed by)

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(original signed by)

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