



Medical Health Officers  
**Alert** for Physicians

# interior health

**July 30, 2014**

## **Health Alert : Ebola disease outbreak in West Africa**

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We are alerting physicians in the Interior Health region of the ongoing Ebola disease outbreak occurring in Western Africa. While the risk to most travellers is considered low, physicians should be vigilant for persons with symptoms compatible with Ebola disease with onset within the 21 day incubation period upon returning from affected countries. All suspected or probable cases of Ebola must be immediately reported to the IH on-call Medical Health Officer by phone. The clinical index of suspicion would obviously be higher in compatible symptoms occurring in a returning aid worker or health care worker returning from the affected area.

To view previous

MHO UPDATES, go to:

[www.interiorhealth.ca/  
AboutUs/Leadership/  
Pages/MHOUpdates.aspx](http://www.interiorhealth.ca/AboutUs/Leadership/Pages/MHOUpdates.aspx)

### **Affected countries:**

As of July 23, 2014, there have been 1201 cases and 672 deaths reported to the World Health Organization by the Ministries of Health in Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone, and additional cases are expected. Cases have been reported in aid workers from the US who had been providing care to Ebola cases in the affected area. Most recently, the Ministry of Health of Nigeria has reported the first probable case of Ebola in a Liberian national who travelled by airplane while symptomatic to Nigeria.

### **CONTACT INFO**

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### **Ebola virus disease:**

Ebola is a severe disease that causes haemorrhagic fever in humans and animals. Diseases that cause haemorrhagic fevers, such as Ebola, are often fatal as they affect the body's vascular system and can lead to significant internal bleeding and organ failure. Symptoms consist of a sudden onset of fever, malaise, myalgia, headache, conjunctival injection, pharyngitis, vomiting, diarrhea that can be bloody, and impaired kidney and liver function. It is spread through contact with infected animals, contact with blood, body fluids or tissues of infected persons, or contact with medical equipment that are contaminated with infected body fluids. The incubation period ranges from 2-21 days, and people are only contagious once they begin to show symptoms. Treatment is supportive. Strict infection control practices should be implemented for any suspected or probable case of Ebola. As long as precautions are taken, there is low risk of contracting Ebola in a country where the disease is present.

**DUTY MHO LINE**  
**(24/7)**

**1-866-457-5648**

**Testing:**

Contact the BCCDC Medical Microbiologist on-call at 604-661-7033 to complete a risk assessment and plan for submission of samples. Health care professionals are advised to be on the lookout for illnesses compatible with Ebola disease in recent travellers, including health care workers, to affected areas and should consider isolation pending diagnostic testing and results; however, other illnesses prevalent in this region should also be considered.

Information on Ebola virus disease, including symptoms, prevention, and treatment is available at: <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/id-mi/vhf-fvh/ebola-eng.php>.

More information on the outbreaks can be found on the World Health Organization's Global Alert and Response website: <http://www.who.int/csr/don/archive/disease/ebola/en/>.