



NORTHUMBERLAND HILLS HOSPITAL

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Ebola information and related links

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY, Sunday, October 19th, 2014—This Notice provides information on the Ebola Virus Disease together with the protocols in place at Northumberland Hills Hospital (NHH) to protect the health of patients, visitors, staff, physicians and volunteers in the event a patient comes to NHH with symptoms consistent with Ebola Virus Disease. NHH has had no patients suspected to have Ebola at this time but, as with all our infection prevention and control planning, we are taking Ebola preparedness very seriously.

About Ebola Virus Disease

Ebola Virus Disease is a rare and deadly disease caused by infection with one of the Ebola virus strains. The virus can infect both humans and animals. When infected, people can get very sick, with fever (38° C/101° F or higher), intense weakness, headache, sore throat and pains, and may bleed from different parts of the body (i.e., hemorrhage).

The Ebola virus can spread through:

- Contact with blood, body fluids or tissues of infected persons;
- Contact with infected animals;
- Contact with equipment and supplies contaminated from infected body fluids.

Current outbreak

The current outbreak is in West Africa, with cases first identified in March 2014. This is the largest and most complex Ebola outbreak since the discovery of the virus in 1976.

In September 2014, North America had its first confirmed Ebola case, in Dallas, Texas. The patient had recently travelled to the United States from Liberia, West Africa. To date, there have been no confirmed cases of Ebola in Canada.

What are the risks of getting Ebola?

The risk of transmission of Ebola is low.

Becoming infected requires direct, physical contact with the bodily fluids (blood, vomit, feces, urine, semen, etc.) of people who have been infected with or died from Ebola. The people most at risk of getting Ebola are those residing in countries where the virus is present, and especially where there is an outbreak.

For someone to have Ebola in Canada, he/she would have:

- Recently travelled to Canada from an Ebola-affected location; or
- Been in close contact with a person who recently travelled to Canada from an Ebola-affected location.

What to do if you think you may be at risk

- Closely monitor your health during and after travel, in particular, monitor your temperature at least twice a day;
- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water;
- Wear a mask and limit contact with other people;
- Go to the nearest hospital emergency department immediately if you develop symptoms, including high fever, body aches, joint pain, vomiting, diarrhea, or hemorrhaging—**be sure to tell the health care provider that you have travelled to a region where Ebola is present and, if possible, alert the emergency department to your possible Ebola risk prior to your arrival.**

Travel health notices and advisories

The Public Health Agency of Canada recommends that **Canadians avoid all non-essential travel to Guinea, Liberia Sierra Leone due to the ongoing Ebola virus outbreak. Travellers to Democratic Republic of Congo are asked to “practise special precautions.”** This recommendation is made to protect Canadian travellers and make it easier for health officials in these countries to dedicate their resources towards controlling the outbreak. The risk of infection is low for most travellers; however the risk may be increased for those who are working in a health care setting or for travellers who require medical care in affected areas as most human infections result from direct contact with body fluids of an infected patient.

More information is available at the websites below:

- [Public Health Agency of Canada](#)
- [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#)

Ebola preparedness at NHH

Northumberland Hills Hospital is monitoring the global progress of Ebola and, together with hospitals and health agencies across Ontario, we are preparing for its possible arrival in Canada with protocols, equipment and training.

NHH has standard procedures in place in alignment with Public Health Ontario in the event that we have a patient under investigation for Ebola, including

- Enhanced screening at the triage desk in our emergency department;
- Immediate notification to the hospital infection prevention and control department;
- Enhanced isolation protocols;
- Enhanced protocols for wearing of personal protective equipment (e.g. gowns, gloves, masks, eye protection, hair and shoe covers etc);
- Enhanced cleaning protocols;
- Enhanced protocols for the management of waste and contaminated linen;
- Enhanced protocols for the handling and collection of laboratory specimens.

We continue to actively monitor the progress of Ebola and update our protocols as required based on the latest evidence and guidance from provincial, national and international authorities.

Designated hospitals

The Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care has designated 11 hospitals as Ebola Virus Disease referral hospitals¹. NHH is not a referral hospital. In the event that a patient considered at risk for Ebola presented at NHH, NHH would care for the patient while testing to confirm Ebola was conducted. If Ebola was confirmed, NHH would work with the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to safely transfer the individual to one of the referral hospitals.

Communication protocol

NHH has had no patients suspected to have Ebola at this time. NHH will, as per the protocols, report any patients suspected of having Ebola to public health authorities and the appropriate government agencies. Working in partnership with these agencies, we would alert the public of any confirmed Ebola patients.

Learn more

More information on what local, provincial and national agencies are doing to be prepared and prevent the spread of Ebola in Canada may be found at the following links:

- [Public Health Ontario](#)
- [Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care](#)
- [Public Health Agency of Canada](#)
- [Kawartha Pine Ridge District Health Unit](#)

Contact

Please contact Jennifer Gillard, NHH Director of Communications and Community Engagement, at jgillard@nhh.ca or 905-377-7757.

¹ As of October 30, 2014, the ministry has designated two paediatric and nine adult hospitals. These hospitals are the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario, Hospital for Sick Children, Hamilton Health Sciences, Health Sciences North, Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre, Kingston General Hospital, London Health Sciences Centre, The Ottawa Hospital, St. Michael's Hospital, Sunnybrook Hospital and University Health Network's Toronto Western Hospital.

About Northumberland Hills Hospital – Located approximately 100 kilometres east of Toronto, NHH delivers a broad range of acute, post-acute, outpatient and diagnostic services. Acute services include emergency and intensive care, medical/surgical care, and obstetrical care. Post-acute specialty services (PASS) include restorative care, rehabilitation and palliative care. Mental health care, chemotherapy, dialysis and 16 other ambulatory care clinics are offered on an outpatient basis through partnerships with regional centres and nearby specialists. NHH offers a full range of diagnostic services, including magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), computed tomography (CT) and mammography. The hospital serves the catchment area of west Northumberland County. A mixed urban and rural population of approximately 60,000 residents, west Northumberland comprises the Town of Cobourg, the Municipality of Port Hope and the townships of Hamilton, Cramahe and Alnwick/Haldimand. NHH employs approximately 600 people and relies on the additional support provided by physicians and volunteers. NHH is an active member of the Central East Local Health Integration Network. For more information, please visit www.nhh.ca or follow us on Twitter [@NorHillsHosp](https://twitter.com/NorHillsHosp).

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