

香港特別行政區政府
衛生署
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THE GOVERNMENT OF THE HONG KONG
SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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12 August 2014

Dear Nurses / Midwives,

Importance of Infection Control Measures in preventing Ebola Virus Disease

I would like to draw your attention to the recent outbreak of Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) in the West African region and provide you with the information of the latest situation.

As of 9 August 2014, World Health Organization (WHO) has reported 1,848 EVD cases including 1,013 deaths in Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone. Latest distribution of cases has been uploaded to the website of the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) at http://chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/evd_affected_area.pdf.

EVD, formerly known as Ebola haemorrhagic fever, is caused by Ebola virus. The disease is transmitted to human through contact with blood, secretions, organs or other body fluids of infected animals including chimpanzees, gorillas, fruit bats, monkeys, forest antelopes and porcupines. Human-to-human transmission is also possible through direct contact with blood, secretions, organs or other body fluids of infected people, and indirect contact with environments contaminated with such fluids. Inadequate infection control measures will increase the risk of transmitting the disease to healthcare workers.

The incubation period of EVD is around 2 to 21 days. Patients may present with sudden onset of fever, intense weakness, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, vomiting, diarrhea,

/ rash ...

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aspire to be an internationally renowned public health authority***

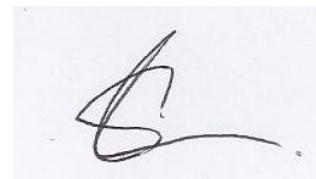
rash, followed by impaired kidney and liver function. In some severe cases, internal and external bleeding may occur. The fatality rate of EVD is up to 90%. People are infectious as long as their blood and secretions contain the virus. Men who have recovered from the disease can still transmit the virus through their semen for up to 7 weeks after recovery from the illness.

In view of the risk of imported infections, healthcare professionals are reminded to comply strictly with appropriate infection control measures in healthcare settings when managing suspected cases and keep abreast of latest development of the disease for advising patients or clients suitably. Infection Control Branch of CHP has prepared the “Interim Recommendations on Infection Control for Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) in Healthcare Setting”, available online at http://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/ic_recommendations_for_evd.pdf. You can find recommendations on isolation of patients, use of personal protective equipment (PPE), and other infection control measures while managing the suspected or confirmed cases.

At the same time, Department of Health has strengthened relevant preventive measures in the community and at various ports. Outbound travellers are advised to avoid unnecessary travel to the affected area. CHP will also provide related health information to the public through different channels including the internet and media.

Your continuous support is essential to the success of combating EVD. You may wish to visit the website of CHP at http://www.chp.gov.hk/en/view_content/34199.html for further information on EVD.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'S. Tsui', written on a light-colored rectangular background.

(Ms Shirley TSUI)
for Director of Health