

Ebola Virus Disease Frequently Asked Questions and Protective Measures

INFORMATION ON EBOLA VIRUS DISEASE

As we have learned from the international press and media, the World Health Organization (WHO) has categorized the Ebola virus as a "Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC)". The disease is often fatal with death rates up to 90%.

According to the United States Centre for Disease Control, the 2014 Ebola epidemic is the largest in history, affecting multiple countries in West Africa. There are currently no reported cases of the disease in Australia or New Zealand, although a number of Australians have been tested, returning negative test results to the disease. The Australian Government have taken measures to prevent/control the disease from, entering the country. In the US there has been one imported case from Liberia and associated locally acquired cases in healthcare workers have been reported.

On October 24, the CDNA (Communicable Disease Network Australia) released National Guidelines for Public Health including PPE for Ebola: <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/ohp-ebola.htm>

This brief is not a substitute for the guidance of the CDNA, Australian Government Department of Health, World Health Organization (WHO) or your local health authority. Please consult their websites for the most current information and infection control procedures regarding Ebola virus disease.

The following is a summary of some of the key information published by the WHO (source: <http://www.who.int/csr/disease/ebola/faq-ebola/en/>). Please note that we have inserted the emphasis on WHO references to the use of personal protective equipment and protective measures:

WHAT IS EBOLA VIRUS DISEASE?

Ebola, previously known as Ebola hemorrhagic fever, is a rare and deadly disease caused by infection with one of the Ebola virus strains. Ebola can cause disease in humans and nonhuman primates (monkeys, gorillas, and chimpanzees). It is a severe, often fatal illness, with a death rate of up to 90%.

HOW DO PEOPLE BECOME INFECTED WITH THE VIRUS?

In the current outbreak in West Africa, the majority of cases in humans have occurred as a result of human-to-human transmission.

Infection occurs from direct contact through broken skin or mucous membranes with the blood, or other bodily fluids or secretions (stool, urine, saliva, semen) of infected people. Infection can also occur if broken skin or mucous membranes of a healthy person come into contact with environments that have become contaminated with an Ebola patient's infectious fluids such as soiled clothing, bed linen, or used needles.

Many healthcare workers have been exposed to the virus while caring for Ebola patients. This happens because they may not have been wearing personal protective equipment or were not properly applying infection prevention and control measures when caring for the patients. Healthcare providers at all levels of the healthcare system – hospitals, clinics, and health posts – should be briefed on the nature of the disease and how it is transmitted, and strictly follow recommended infection control precautions.

WHO IS MOST AT RISK?

During an outbreak, those at higher risk of infection are:

- health workers;
- family members or others in close contact with infected people;
- mourners who have direct contact with the bodies of the deceased as part of burial ceremonies.

More research is needed to understand if some groups, such as immuno-compromised people or those with other underlying health conditions, are more susceptible than others to contracting the virus.

Exposure to the virus can be controlled through the use of protective measures in clinics and hospitals, at community gatherings, or at home.

WHAT CAN I DO? CAN IT BE PREVENTED? IS THERE A VACCINE?

Currently, there is no licensed medicine or vaccine for Ebola virus disease, but several products are under development.

Important Website Links:

CDNA: <http://www.health.gov.au/cdna>

WHO: <http://who.int/csr/disease/ebola/en/>

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE) FOR EBOLA VIRUS DISEASE

The WHO recommends infection prevention and control measures (IPC) including the use of personal protective equipment for those providing direct or non-direct care to patients with suspected cases of Ebola virus disease. For further details, we specifically refer you to WHO guidance "Interim Infection Prevention and Control Guidance for Care of Patients with Suspected or Confirmed Filovirus Haemorrhagic Fever in Health-Care Settings, with focus on Ebola" available at http://www.who.int/csr/resources/publications/ebola/filovirus_infection_control/en/

The CDNA in conjunction with the Australian Govt Dept of health has also provided Guidance on Personal Protective Equipment to be Used in suspected, probable or confirmed cases of Ebola

[http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/ohp-ebola.htm/\\$File/EVD-SoNG.pdf](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/ohp-ebola.htm/$File/EVD-SoNG.pdf)

The guidance recommends the following:

Cover all skin using appropriate combination of PPE including, but not limited to:

- Gloves
- Fluid resistant long sleeved gown
- Eye protection (e.g. goggles)
- P2/N95 respirator
- Face shields, leg and shoe coverings, overalls.

The purpose of this brief is to provide you with details of some of our PPE that may be suitable for use, subject to CDNA guidance, when working in an environment where the Ebola virus may be present or with people affected by the virus. When selecting PPE for particular use it is essential to note that:

- Our PPE is certified for use in countries where AS/NZS, ANSI or EU certification is valid; please contact your Honeywell representative if your location or your regulations require a different type of certification.
- If you are involved in infection control activities relating to the Ebola virus, you should ensure that you have read and are fully familiar with the WHO Infection, Prevention and Control (IPC) Guidance available at: <http://www.who.int/csr/disease/ebola/evd-guidance-summary/en/>
- Although PPE can prevent infected material from coming into contact with mouth, nose, eyes and broken skin, it is essential that all relevant infection prevention and control (IPC) protocols, and our manufacturer's user instructions are followed when (i) putting on (donning) and removing (doffing) PPE to avoid contamination, and (ii) when cleaning any reusable PPE.
- **OUR PPE IS NOT DESIGNED TO BE USED IN MEDICAL OPERATIONS REQUIRING STERILE PRODUCTS.**