



First Nations Health Authority  
Health through wellness

## Communique | Ebola: What you need to know

October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2014

The Ebola outbreak continues to be a serious concern in the African countries of Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia. However, the risk to British Columbians, including First Nations communities, at this time is very low. To be clear, there have been no confirmed cases of Ebola in British Columbia, or in Canada as a whole.

Ebola is a virus that has been around for decades and has been infecting citizens in Africa for a number of years. The illness that an infected person receives can be serious and even cause the death of that person. However, there are people who have been infected and who have survived.

At this time, there are many new cases of Ebola in Africa, and a few people who traveled from Africa to the United States or Europe who were infected with Ebola and treated in hospitals. There have been a few cases of health care workers who became infected after taking care of Ebola patients in those hospitals.

It is important to note the virus doesn't spread easily from person to person or through casual contact, but is spread through direct contact with infected body fluids, particularly blood, vomit and feces (poop). One cannot get Ebola just by being around someone, even if they were infected.

Health care staff in Canada have guidelines for wearing personal protective clothing, including a gown, plastic face shield, a protective mask, and gloves. With proper use, this equipment will protect a health care worker from becoming infected.

British Columbia Ministry of Health is working to ensure that the Province has the best preparation possible for the diagnosis and treatment of any Ebola patient, including all of the measures needed to keep health care staff safe from infection. The First Nations Health Authority is "hardwired" into Provincial planning efforts and works to ensure that concerns and needs of community members and health care workers in First Nations communities are addressed.

The FNHA is providing updated information to health professionals in First Nations communities. We encourage communities as a best practice to ensure that your pandemic plans are current. If you have further questions about Ebola please contact your community health nurse.