



# Ebola Virus

Information for **Blood** Programs  
in regions where Ebola cases are active

## Can Ebola virus be transmitted via blood transfusion?

Transfusion transmission of ebolaviruses has not been reported. However, it is theoretically possible given Ebola virus is typically detectable in the blood when someone is unwell.

## What messages should be conveyed to the public?

Maintain regular and simple communication to the public on:

- demand for blood is ongoing (ie. number of units needed per month), healthy donors should be encouraged to continue to donate - blood has a shelf life and needs to be replenished regularly
- it is safe for donors to give blood
- blood is only collected from healthy individuals who are not at risk for Ebola Virus disease (EVD)
- donor selection criteria excludes all donors who are unwell or exhibiting symptoms
- additional donor selection measures in place where there is an outbreak of Ebola virus with widespread transmission
- reaffirm an ongoing commitment to safety measures - PPE, cleaning
- **if you are feeling unwell, stay home**



See page 2 for more information regarding donor selection criteria

## Considerations for blood donor programmes

- **ensure safety** - undertake close monitoring of infected areas, ensuring mobile units are not scheduled to occur in high risk areas
- **educate donors** - provide donors with materials advising of any changes to donor selection criteria to enable them to self-defer prior to attending blood collection
- **post-donation** - ensure blood donors are advised to contact the place where you donated blood if you develop any symptoms of EVD or feel unwell for any reason up to 14 days after donation.

## Ensure regular monitoring and response

It is recommended National Society Blood Programs remain in constant contact with their own public health authorities (and for Category B NS, with the blood service) to closely monitor the situation in their own country (and region) and develop and adjust responses accordingly.

Information current as at November 2022

## For more information refer to the following resources:

1. FDA - [Recommendations for Assessment of Blood Donor Eligibility, Donor Deferral and Blood Product Management in Response to Ebola Virus: Guidance for Industry: \(2017\)](https://www.fda.gov/files/vaccines,%20blood%20&%20biologics/published/Recommendations-for-Assessment-of-Blood-Donor-Eligibility--Donor-Deferral-and-Blood-Product-Management-in-Response-to-Ebola-Virus--Guidance-for-Industry.pdf). Available at: <https://www.fda.gov/files/vaccines,%20blood%20&%20biologics/published/Recommendations-for-Assessment-of-Blood-Donor-Eligibility--Donor-Deferral-and-Blood-Product-Management-in-Response-to-Ebola-Virus--Guidance-for-Industry.pdf>
2. WHO - [Ebola virus disease Q&A](https://www.who.int/news-room/questions-and-answers/item/ebola-virus-disease?gclid=EAlalQobChMIx5Kdy-qS-wlVTTsrCh2iPAa-EAAYASABEglzwvD_BwE). Available at: [https://www.who.int/news-room/questions-and-answers/item/ebola-virus-disease?gclid=EAlalQobChMIx5Kdy-qS-wlVTTsrCh2iPAa-EAAYASABEglzwvD\\_BwE](https://www.who.int/news-room/questions-and-answers/item/ebola-virus-disease?gclid=EAlalQobChMIx5Kdy-qS-wlVTTsrCh2iPAa-EAAYASABEglzwvD_BwE)
3. ECDC - [Risk of Ebola virus transmission through donated blood and other substances of human origin](https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/all-topics-z/ebola-virus-disease/facts/risk-ebola-virus-transmission-through-donated-blood-and). Available at: <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/all-topics-z/ebola-virus-disease/facts/risk-ebola-virus-transmission-through-donated-blood-and>



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## Donor selection criteria

*(the below advice is based on recommendations from [FDA](#) and [ECDC](#))*

### Can you donate blood after recovering from EVD?

No, individuals with a history of Ebola virus infection or disease should be permanently / indefinitely deferred from donating blood as a precaution because there is a low risk of recurrence of the virus.

### What about close contacts without symptoms?

Close (non-sexual) contacts should not donate blood for eight (8) weeks from last contact whilst a case is currently infected, or under investigation for Ebola virus infection or disease. This includes healthcare workers, or those who have lived with or cared for the known person.

For sexual contacts, the deferral should remain even after the case has recovered, for a period of eight (8) weeks from last contact.

### Any travel-related deferrals?

Travel related deferrals should be implemented - eight (8) weeks for individuals who have been a resident or travelled to a country with widespread transmission. Travel deferrals should be regularly reviewed in close consultation with Ministry of Health and consider the extent of EVD spread in the area.

### Is there a vaccination deferral period?

Individuals who have recently received a vaccine for Ebola virus may be temporarily deferred from donating - the deferral timeframe will depend on the type of vaccine received and the reason for vaccination (for example if vaccinating due to being a close contact, then that deferral period would apply).

### What if I develop symptoms after donating?

Contact the place where you donated blood if you develop any symptoms of EVD or feel unwell for any reason up to 14 days after donation.



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