
Event	Ebola disease caused by Bundibugyo virus
Notified by	Clinical Team, Protection, National Public Health Service
Authorised by	Dr Susan Jack, National Clinical Director, Protection, National Public Health Service
To	Chief Medical Officers, hospital specialists, primary care, NPHS national and regional services, Office of the Director of Public Health (Manatū Hauora).

For awareness

Ebola disease caused by Bundibugyo virus – the current risk for New Zealand is low.

Summary

Health New Zealand’s National Public Health Service (NPHS) alerts healthcare professionals about an Ebola outbreak caused by Bundibugyo virus in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Uganda. This outbreak was declared by the World Health Organization (WHO) to be a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC) on 16 May 2026.

The risk to New Zealand is currently assessed as **low**.

As of 27 May 2026, Health NZ is not aware of any New Zealand national or person in New Zealand who has been exposed to Ebola disease. An end-to-end health sector plan is currently being worked through to support a domestic response.

The outbreak

As of 24 May 2026, there have been 906 suspected cases of Ebola disease, among whom there have been 223 deaths. There have been 112 confirmed cases (including seven in Uganda), among whom there have been 11 deaths (including one in Uganda).

There is no approved vaccine or specific treatment for Bundibugyo virus, although research is currently underway to develop these.

The outbreak is occurring in a challenging context due to the humanitarian crisis in DRC, ongoing insecurity, high-population mobility and large network of informal healthcare facilities in the region making it difficult to identify all cases and increasing the risk of further spread.

The DRC and Uganda, together with international partners, are responding to the outbreak. The WHO is working with those governments to strengthen outbreak control through surveillance, contact tracing, clinical preparedness and management, delivery of supplies and community engagement, and cross-border preparedness.

Investigations into the outbreak are ongoing and as more information becomes available public health advice and guidance may change.

The disease

Bundibugyo virus (one of the *Orthoebolavirus* species) causes a severe and often fatal form of Ebola disease. The case fatality rate from the past two Bundibugyo virus outbreaks in Uganda and in DRC in 2007 and 2012 have ranged between 30% and 50%. Infection in humans occurs through close contact with the bodily fluids of

infected animals and subsequently spreads from person to person via direct contact with infected bodily fluids (e.g. blood and saliva) or with contaminated surfaces.

The incubation period for Ebola disease is between 2 and 21 days after exposure to the virus, with most people developing symptoms within 4 to 10 days after exposure.

People are considered infectious from when they develop symptoms and for as long as their blood or other body fluids contain the virus.

Symptoms can develop suddenly and include fever, fatigue, malaise, muscle pain, headache and sore throat. These are followed by vomiting, diarrhoea, abdominal pain rash, and symptoms of impaired kidney and liver function. Internal and external bleeding is less frequent and can occur later in the disease. Patients may also experience neurological symptoms such as confusion, irritability and aggression.

Treatment for Ebola disease is supportive.

Advice to travellers

See the links below for advice for travellers from SafeTravel about reducing risks by avoiding contact with potential sources and what to do if concerned about Ebola.

New Zealand's planned response

No travel or trade restrictions are currently recommended. NPHS has existing processes in place to ensure any unwell arriving travellers are managed appropriately.

NPHS is coordinating work to develop an end-to-end plan that will be implemented if a person exposed to Ebola needs to return to New Zealand. This includes arrangements for safe transfer with appropriate infection prevention and control measures in place and quarantine in an appropriate location.

Planning is also underway to ensure appropriate clinical assessment, testing, isolation, and management pathways are in place should the person develop symptoms.

Coordination is underway to ensure a coordinated plans and rapid sharing of surveillance information.:

- Across the health sector, in particular within Health NZ with NPHS, Hospital and Specialist Services, Infection Prevention and Control, Infectious Diseases, with the NZ Microbiology Network and laboratories
- Between other government agencies, including Health NZ, the Ministry of Health, PHF Science, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade
- With border agencies
- With the WHO and other governments
- With non-governmental organisations and other entities deploying personnel to respond to the outbreak.

Key messages for healthcare professionals

- The current risk to New Zealand is low.
- As of 27 May 2025, Health NZ is not aware of any New Zealand national or any person in New Zealand who has been exposed to Ebola. Health NZ understands there are no New Zealand nationals currently

registered with SafeTravel as being in DRC and small numbers in Uganda. An end-to-end health sector plan is being worked through to support a domestic response.

- In the unlikely event that Ebola disease is suspected:
 - Notify the Public Health Service in your area urgently by phone call. Contact details for local public health services can be found [here](#).
 - Discuss testing with your local clinical microbiology service. Ebola virus testing is initially carried out by PHF Science (through a pan-filovirus PCR which will detect all Ebola strains) and then sent to Victorian Infectious Diseases Reference Laboratory (VIDRL) in Australia for confirmation.
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Further information

More information about Ebola disease: [WHO Ebola disease fact sheet](#)

Updates on the current outbreak: [WHO Ebola Disease Outbreak News](#)

Travel health advice: [SafeTravel - DRC](#), [SafeTravel - Ebola outbreak in the DRC and Uganda](#), [SafeTravel - Infectious diseases](#) and [Keeping healthy while travelling](#)