

Notification Pathway for Special Pathogens

The following notification pathway is to be used when a potential special pathogen case is identified in a human.

A **special pathogen (SP)** is a term applied to encompass Risk Group 4 pathogens and unknown emerging pathogens that are highly infectious, involve human-to-human transmission, likely cause severe disease and high mortality, and when effective prevention and treatment measures may not be available.

1. Infectious disease physician completes [risk assessment](#)¹, identifies potential SP case, and implements appropriate IPAC protocols² for a SP.

If an entity does not have the expertise to conduct a SP risk assessment, call your Public Health Unit (PHU)³ and/or the Public Health Ontario Laboratory (PHOL) Customer Service Centre⁴ to support the assessment.

Entities that may identify a potential SP case include a hospital, Quarantine Officer, PHOL, PHU, Emergency Medical Services (EMS), or community clinic.

2. Notify the Ministry of Health (MOH), Health System Emergency Management Branch (HSEMB) via the 24/7 Health Care Provider Hotline (1-866-212-2272, ext. 1) and your PHU.

3. Within 30 minutes of notification, MOH HSEMB will convene a call with relevant health partners to assess the situation.

Relevant partners include, but are not limited to the implicated hospital or health care setting, designated hospital/treatment centre, PHU, EMS/Ornge, Public Health Ontario (PHO), PHOL, Ontario Health (OH), National Microbiology Laboratory (NML)

Should the individual be investigated as a potential SP case?

YES

NO

MORE INFO NEEDED

4a. Further MOH-coordinated discussion/calls regarding:

- Testing plan⁵ (as applicable*)
- Patient care and transfer
 - Case and contact management
 - Communications
 - Waste management

**For new emerging pathogens, testing may not be available.*

4b. Determination that a coordination call is no longer needed.

- Coordination, including communications, on standing down.

4c. Additional follow-up/investigation as needed.

- Determine what additional steps need to be taken, including further coordination and communication needs, while investigation is ongoing.

Footnotes and Additional Resources

1. Public Health Ontario Viral Hemorrhagic Fever (VHF) Symptom and Exposure Risk Assessment Tool: [Viral Hemorrhagic Fever \(VHF\) Symptom and Exposure Risk Assessment](#)
2. Public Health Ontario IPAC Resources for Viral Hemorrhagic Fevers: <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/Diseases-and-Conditions/Infectious-Diseases/Vector-Borne-Zoonotic-Diseases/Ebola>
3. Locate your Public Health Unit: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/public-health-unit-locations>.
4. Public Health Ontario Laboratory Customer Service Centre: 416-235-6556/1-877-604-4567 during normal business hours; 416-605-3113 after-hours.
5. Public Health Ontario Diagnostic Serology for Viral Haemorrhagic Fevers: <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/Laboratory-Services/Test-Information-Index/VHF-Diagnostic-Serology>

For Ministry of Health guidance regarding special pathogens, refer to:

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/ministry-health-emergency-management-plans-and-strategies>.