



Viral Haemorrhagic Fever (VHF) Advice and risk assessment for childcare, school and college settings

There have been no cases of VHF in Ireland to date and the risk of VHF disease arriving in Ireland is **very low**.

Viral haemorrhagic fever agents (VHFs) are types of viral diseases that may cause a bleeding syndrome in humans. VHFs of particular concern however are those that have shown the chance for person-to-person spread. These are: Ebola, Marburg, Lassa fever and other Arenaviruses, and Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever.

These diseases cause a rare but serious viral infection, which is only passed on by direct contact with the blood, bodily fluids (saliva, urine, stool, breast milk) and organs of an infected person. Unlike influenza, the virus is not spread through the air.

It remains unlikely, but not impossible, that a person infected with VHF could arrive in Ireland.

Key points:

- the risk of VHF disease arriving in Ireland is **very low**
- there have been several previous outbreaks of VHF disease in Africa
- transmission of VHF disease from person to person is by direct contact with the blood and body fluids of an ill person with the disease. Unlike influenza, the virus is not spread through the air. Persons without symptoms do not transmit the infection.
- the time between contact with the infected person and the time that first symptoms appear (incubation period) of VHF disease ranges from two to 21 days
- any child/student arriving back in Ireland having travelled from any affected countries, and who are without symptoms, are **not infectious** and there should be
- **no restrictions** on their childcare/school/college attendance or normal activities

The attached algorithm has been developed specifically to assist childcare, schools, and college settings who may have children/students/staff returning or visiting from affected countries.

All staff or those with contact with children/students should already be aware of what to do if a child/student falls ill and there is general guidance (referenced below) on infection control in childcare, school or college settings. Further information about VHF outbreaks can be found on the following websites:

[HPSC](#)

[WHO](#)

[Department of Foreign affairs and Trade travel advice](#)

VHF disease risk assessment in childcare/schools/college settings with travel from affected country within the last 21 days

This algorithm is to inform the assessment of unwell children/students in childcare/schools/college settings, and will assist the public health response and ensure the appropriate organisations are informed. If the child is unable to answer questions, please seek information from the responsible adult.

