

# Viral Haemorrhagic Fever (VHF)

## Advice for Community (Non-Acute Healthcare) Settings

This guidance is for all individuals in the community setting who may through their job or social interaction, come in contact with a person who may be infected with Viral Haemorrhagic Fevers (VHF).

### Key Messages:

- The likelihood of contracting VHF in Ireland is extremely low but it is important to be prepared.
- VHF is not spread through the air. It is only spread if there is direct contact with the blood or body fluids (saliva, urine, faeces, vomit, semen, breast milk) of a person who is sick with VHF.
- If you do come in contact with a suspected VHF case, follow the flow diagram below which outlines the basic steps you should take in case of such an event.

### What to do if you come into contact with a suspected VHF case?

Ask the following questions:

Has the person arrived from a VHF affected area within the past 21 days?

See [www.hpsc.ie](http://www.hpsc.ie) for an up-to-date list of VHF-affected areas

**If NO**, continue as normal

**If YES**

Does the person appear unwell? Symptoms to look out for include fever (e.g. pale skin, sweating, shivering), diarrhoea, vomiting, weakness, muscle and joint pains and headaches?

**If NO**, then you are not at risk of contracting VHF. VHF is only contagious if the infected person has symptoms of infection.

**If YES**

1. **Talk - Don't Touch.** Maintain a distance of **at least 3 feet/ 1 metre** from the person (unless the person is vomiting – then maintain a distance of **7-10 feet/ 2-3 metres**)
2. **Isolate the person** (e.g. Move the person into a side room, ideally with a toilet and telephone to enable telephone assessment if necessary)
3. **Call an ambulance.** Tell them that the ill person has recently returned from a VHF-affected area
4. **Handwashing** with soap and water is an important method for protecting yourself and your community from the spread of VHF
5. **Advice on environmental cleaning can be found on the [HPSC website](http://www.hpsc.ie)**