Special Pathogens and Emergency Department Response

Dispatch and Triage

- Screen patients for exposures within the past 21 days (sick contacts, international travel), especially during known outbreaks.
- Look for evidence of communicable disease (fever, rash, cough, gastrointestinal symptoms).
- Patients with a suspected SP should be isolated from other patients and have a surgical mask placed over the face or oxygen delivery device, if tolerated and not intubated.
- Public health notification of a patient with a suspected SP should occur promptly via the hospital’s incident command system or other formal mechanism.

Patient Care

- Screen for exposures to outbreak areas or sick persons within the past 21 days.
- If not already done, notify ED manager and infection prevention promptly for patients with a suspected SP.
- Point-of-care ultrasound can reduce exposure for radiology staff.
- Videolaryngoscopy is preferred for intubation.
- Ensure that there is a surgical mask on the patient (over the oxygen delivery device, if tolerated).
- Rooms and patient care items such as stethoscopes and blood pressure cuffs must be decontaminated after use.
- Consider early transfer to a dedicated receiving or treatment center for a patient with a suspected SP: https://netec.org/about-netec/partners-regional-contacts

Personal Protective Equipment

- Multiple types exist for different SPs.
- Use checklists to ensure safety (especially for EVD/VHF).
- Understand and drill in different forms of PPE to ensure your own safety and minimize delays in care.
- Avoid direct contact until proper PPE is donned.
- Hand hygiene with soap and water is preferred for many SPs, especially if gloves are visibly soiled.
- Doffing for suspected EVD/VHF is a high-risk activity and must be done in a dedicated PPE removal area.
- Items marked below with an asterisk (*) may be appropriate in some circumstances but are never wrong to use if uncertain.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of precaution</th>
<th>Components</th>
<th>Diseases</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standard</td>
<td>Gloves * Eye protection * Surgical mask</td>
<td>All patient contact involving body fluids or non-intact skin</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contact</td>
<td>Gloves * Impermeable gown * Eye protection * Surgical mask</td>
<td>Infectious diarrhea * Draining wounds * Scabies and lice * RSV</td>
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<tr>
<td>Droplet</td>
<td>Surgical mask * Eye protection * Gloves</td>
<td>Meningitis * Most respiratory infections (viruses, pneumonias)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Airborne</td>
<td>N95 or PAPR * Eye protection * Gloves</td>
<td>Tuberculosis * Chickenpox * Measles</td>
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<tr>
<td>Special respiratory</td>
<td>N95 or PAPR * Impermeable gown * Eye protection * Gloves</td>
<td>COVID-19 * Novel influenza, e.g., H5N1 * MERS * Mpox * Smallpox</td>
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<tr>
<td>EVD/VHF</td>
<td>N95 or PAPR * Impermeable gown * Eye protection (face shield) * Double gloves * Shoe coverings</td>
<td>VHF, e.g., Ebola, Marburg</td>
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