

Viral Hemorrhagic Fevers (VHF)

(Ebola, Marburg, Lassa, Rift Valley, Yellow Fever, Dengue Fever, Hantavirus, Congo-Crimean, and Venezuelan Hemorrhagic fevers)

Louisiana Office of Public Health Laboratory Services (LA SPHL) (504) 219-4664 or (504) 219-4646, 24 Hour Number (504) 458-9537

Louisiana Office of Public Health Infectious Disease Epidemiology (800) 256-2748 (24 hours).

The SPHL is not equipped to process any specimen for hemorrhagic fever. All specimens will be transported to the CDC.

Remember that these samples may be highly infective! Extreme caution should be taken in collecting, preparing for shipment and transporting any material suspected of being contaminated with a biological agent.

Specimen collection and transport

Contact the LA SPHL at (504) 219-4664 or (504) 219-4646 prior to collecting any samples to obtain specific instructions.

Clinical:

Collect vesicular tissue, scabs, ocular impressions, biopsy tissues or serum. If swabs are used, rayon or dacron are required. Do not centrifuge suspected VHF specimens because this increases risk to the laboratory workers. Place specimens in plastic tubes for shipping and storage and be sure that the tubes are sealed and properly labeled. Biopsy specimens should be fixed in formalin and stored at room temperature (do not freeze). Samples expected to arrive at the LA SPHL within 24 hours of collection should be shipped refrigerated (2°C to 8°C).

Samples exceeding the 24 hour transportation requirement should be frozen (-20°C to -70°C). Exceptions to this are serum, which should remain refrigerated (2°C to 8°C), and formalin fixed biopsies which should not be frozen.

Signs and Symptoms:

Within a few days of becoming infected with VHF: High fever, headache, muscle aches, stomach pain, fatigue, diarrhea, sore throat, rash, red and itchy eyes, vomiting blood, bloody diarrhea.

Within one week of becoming infected with VHF: chest pain, blindness, bleeding, shock, and death.