

Integrating Menstrual Health & Hygiene into Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) Response

Why menstrual health & hygiene matters in EVD response

Menstruation can be mistaken for EVD-related bleeding, leading to stigma and unnecessary isolation. Menstrual blood also needs safe handling for suspected and confirmed cases. **Integrating attention to menstrual health & hygiene (MHH) within an EVD response is essential for the safety and wellbeing of female patients and suspected cases, for girls and women living in affected communities, and for response staff.**

Key actions for response teams

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Train response staff on how to meet the needs of menstruating women and girls during an EVD outbreak.
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Clarify and contextualize the case definition of Ebola, including the difference between “explicable bleeding” (e.g. menstruation) vs. potentially “inexplicable bleeding” (e.g. prenatal bleeding); the latter of which may be a sign of EVD.
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Provide female-friendly Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) facilities for patients and staff throughout the healthcare system.
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Ensure healthcare facilities (HCFs) have safe and private menstrual disposal and waste management systems.
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Provide menstrual materials for patients, community members in isolation, affected communities and response staff.
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Develop messaging and education about how menstruation is not a symptom of EVD for communities and response workers.
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Ensure that program activities and messaging do not further stigmatize menstruation and menstruating women and girls.
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Collaborate and engage across sectors, particularly WASH, Protection, and Health.

The ***Integrating Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) into Ebola Response Guidance Note*** offers practical guidance for integrating menstrual health into Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) response from diagnosis through community-level recovery. [Read the full guidance here.](#)