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EBOLA VIRUS IN SEMEN: A GUIDE FOR SURVIVORS

The risk of spreading the Ebola virus from a survivor to another person is low. However, once a man has recovered from Ebola, it is possible to transmit the virus to a partner through sexual transmission, since the virus persists in a male survivor's semen long after he has recovered.

As with other sexually transmitted diseases, **male survivors** must protect their sexual partner from the Ebola virus by **using a condom during any sex act** or by **abstaining from having sex**. Using one of these two approaches is critical during the **first 12 months after discharge** from an Ebola care and treatment center (ETU/ETC).

FOR MALE SURVIVORS AND THEIR PARTNERS

Within the first 3 months of disease onset:

- **Enroll in your national semen testing program**



During the first 12 months after discharge from Ebola treatment:

- **Use a condom during any sex act or abstain from having sex**



RISK OF TRANSMITTING EBOLA THROUGH SEMEN

50% of male survivors will still have Ebola in their semen for up to 4 months following recovery/discharge.

10% of male survivors will still have Ebola in their semen for up to 10 months following recovery/discharge.

In rare cases, the Ebola virus has persisted in older survivors for up to 2.6 years (32 months).

Source: U.S. National Institutes of Health, PREVAIL III

FOR FEMALE SURVIVORS, THEIR PARTNERS, AND THEIR CHILDREN



Once a person has recovered, there is no evidence of transmission of Ebola through other bodily fluids, such as blood, breast milk, vaginal, or amniotic fluid.

However, the virus may persist in the placenta, amniotic fluid, and fetus of women who became infected *while* pregnant. The virus may also persist in breast milk of women who have been infected *while* breastfeeding.

Transmission of the virus is very rare and therefore women are encouraged to maintain normal delivery and breastfeeding practices once they have recovered from Ebola.

More information about Ebola virus disease guidelines can be found in the following report: World Health Organization. *International meeting on persistence of Ebola virus RNA in semen and implications for public health*. Switzerland: World Health Organization. Forthcoming.

IMPORTANT STEPS TO TAKE IF YOU ARE A MALE EBOLA SURVIVOR



ENROLL IN A SEMEN TESTING PROGRAM

- **Enroll in your national semen testing program as soon as possible following recovery/discharge** (see contact information on the back of this pamphlet).
- Use a condom during sex.
- Attend counseling with your partner and ask questions.

IF YOU ARE NOT ABLE TO ACCESS A SEMEN TESTING PROGRAM:
You are advised to continue to use condoms. In rare cases, the Ebola virus has persisted in survivors for up to 32 months.



SUBMIT MONTHLY SEMEN SAMPLES UNTIL YOU HAVE TWO CONSECUTIVE NEGATIVE TESTS

- **Submit monthly semen samples until Ebola RNA is undetected (negative) in two consecutive samples.**
- Continue to use a condom during sex.
- Continue to attend counseling with your partner.
- If your tests are indeterminate or positive for Ebola RNA, **continue testing** until Ebola RNA is undetected in two consecutive tests.



RISK OF TRANSMITTING THE EBOLA VIRUS IS VERY LOW ONCE YOUR SEMEN TESTS ARE NEGATIVE

- **After two consecutive negative Ebola RNA semen tests, your risk of transmitting Ebola to your partner through sex is very low.**
- For questions regarding your follow-up care or treatment, please contact your national semen testing program or Ebola survivor network.

NATIONAL SEMEN TESTING PROGRAMS IN SIERRA LEONE

Comprehensive Program for EVD Survivors (CPES)

Dr. Kwame O'Neill, *Manager*

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Project GOAL

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NATIONAL EBOLA SURVIVOR ASSOCIATION IN SIERRA LEONE

Sierra Leone Association of Ebola Survivors (SLAES)

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