



March 29, 2005

Guidelines for laboratories handling suspected Marburg specimens

IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT THIS PROCEDURE IS FOLLOWED FOR ALL SUSPECTED CASES

There is currently an outbreak of Marburg in Angola in the province of Uige. Cases have all originated in Uige, but some patients have been treated in other areas in Angola including Luanda, Cabinda, Malanje and Cuanza Norte. Although it is unlikely that patients will present at SA health care facilities, it is essential to be prepared for these events. Please follow these guidelines if you receive specimen or queries regarding possible Marburg in travelers from Angola.

- 1) **Immediately** contact the NICD to discuss the case **BEFORE** sending any specimens:
 - a. Dr Lucille Blumberg – 011 386 6337 OR 082 807 6770
 - b. Dr Gillian de Jong – 011 386 6409 OR 083 3698014
 - c. Outbreak hotline – 082 883 9920
- 2) If it is agreed on discussion that specimens should be processed for suspected Marburg, transport specimens to the Special Pathogens Unit, NICD Sandringham as follows:
 - a. **USE APPROPRIATE PRECAUTIONS AT ALL TIMES WHEN HANDLING BLOOD OR OTHER BODY FLUIDS.**
 - b. Wrap blood specimen tubes separately in absorbent material e.g.: cotton wool.
 - c. Then place the specimens in a secondary container, preferably sturdy plastic or stainless steel with a well fitting lid.
 - d. Wrap them again in absorbent material and place in another container.
 - e. Put the patient details on the **OUTSIDE** of this container including:
 - i. Patient Name and hospital number
 - ii. Doctor and contact no.
 - iii. Lab Name and contact person.
 - iv. Clinical details.
 - v. Results of any tests already performed.
 - f. Address the package to: The NICD Special Pathogens Unit, 1 Modderfontein Road Sandringham Johannesburg. For Attention: Dr Burt or Dr Paweska.
- 3) **Please note:** the BSL4 laboratory at the NICD Special Pathogens Unit (SPU) is not operational currently. If it is decided that testing for Marburg should be done on a particular case, specimens will be sent on by the unit to the CDC Atlanta for processing.

