

Healthcare Providers: Ebola - What You Need to Know

Quick Take-Aways

- The likelihood of an Ebola outbreak occurring in the U.S. remains extremely low, even considering the confirmation of cases that may be diagnosed here.
- The infection control and contact investigation practices used in the U.S. are very advanced and well configured to contain infectious diseases, including Ebola.
- The U.S. public health system has specific procedures in place to help identify and isolate persons who are sick with Ebola and to do the same for their contacts.
- And finally, we would like to remind everyone that they are more likely to become ill with flu, measles and other vaccine-preventable illnesses than Ebola.



Healthcare providers commonly evaluate for infectious or travel-related disease.

Whenever a reportable condition is suspected, providers must contact their local health department for guidance and assistance. Public health is an important partner with the medical community and can provide information to help coordinate careful, safe and thorough patient evaluation.

Travel-related conditions with fever may include a number of diseases.

Consider Ebola if the patient traveled to **Guinea, Liberia or Sierra Leone in the last 21 days and has fever**, severe headaches, muscle pain, weakness, diarrhea, vomiting, abdominal pain, or unexplained hemorrhage.

As you know, clinical evaluation (including appropriate laboratory testing) ultimately determines a final diagnosis. The most likely presentations of travel-related fever in patients are from malaria or other tropical diseases, not Ebola.

It is important for healthcare providers to remain vigilant and **contact public health immediately whenever they are considering a possible Ebola diagnosis**, even if the final diagnosis turns out to be a more common tropical disease.



It's important to remember that even if a person is diagnosed with Ebola in a community, the community at-large would not be at risk.

Since Ebola is spread by **direct** contact with a person diagnosed with Ebola or the bodily fluids of a person diagnosed with Ebola, the risk for further transmission is limited to those in **direct** contact and not to the community at large.

Additional Information About Ebola

When reviewing information about Ebola, please remember that only two people have ever developed Ebola while in the U.S. and that public risk to exposure to Ebola is very low.

- **HCPH** has developed an Ebola page to assist our partners and stakeholders in remaining informed about issues relevant to Ebola (www.hcphtx.org/Resources/2014-2015-Ebola-Outbreak) .
- **The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** has more information about Ebola, their prevention activities, and the outbreak in West Africa (<http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/>).

