



## **Ebola**

### **Public Information – Update 5**

**Date: October 17, 2014**

**Time: 1:00 PM**

**\*\* Highlighted text indicates new, revised or updated information**

#### **EBOLA--CURRENT CASES**

##### **What is the situation in Africa currently?**

West Africa is currently experiencing the largest Ebola outbreak in history. The outbreak is getting worse, but the CDC and other US agencies and international partners are taking active steps to respond to this rapidly changing situation.

##### **Are there any people with Ebola in the US?**

Yes, on September 30, 2014, the CDC confirmed the first case of Ebola to be diagnosed in the United States in a person who had traveled to Dallas, Texas from West Africa. The person sought medical care at Texas Presbyterian Hospital of Dallas after developing symptoms consistent with Ebola. He died of Ebola on October 8 and was cremated.

Two healthcare workers involved in the care of this patient have recently tested positive for Ebola:

- On October 10, a healthcare worker at Texas Presbyterian Hospital reported a low-grade fever and was referred for testing. The healthcare worker was isolated after the initial report of a fever. CDC confirms that the healthcare worker is positive for Ebola, but she is now recovering.
- On October 14, a second healthcare worker from Texas Presbyterian Hospital tested positive for Ebola. The healthcare worker traveled by air October 10 and again October 13, the day before she reported symptoms. Out of an abundance of caution, CDC is reaching out to passengers who flew on Frontier Airlines flight 1142 Dallas/Fort Worth to Cleveland in addition to Frontier flight 1143. Passengers who may have traveled on flight 1142 or flight 1143 should contact CDC at 1 800-CDC INFO (1 800 232-4636).

**Health care workers wear protective clothing, so how is it possible for a health care worker to get Ebola?**

The CDC does not yet know the source of the exposure of the infected health care workers and the investigation is ongoing.

In response to this situation, CDC has recently deployed a second team of public health professionals to Texas Presbyterian Hospital in Dallas. The CDC team is assisting the hospital in rapidly reducing the risk of further spread of Ebola and investigating how the healthcare workers may have become infected with Ebola.

**What is the CDC doing to prevent the spread of Ebola in the US?**

CDC and partners are taking precautions to prevent the spread of Ebola within the United States. CDC is working with other U.S. government agencies, the World Health Organization (WHO), and other domestic and international partners and has activated its Emergency Operations Center to help coordinate technical assistance and control activities with partners. CDC has also deployed teams of public health experts to West Africa and will continue to send experts to the affected countries.

**Are there any people with Ebola in New Jersey?**

No, there are no people in New Jersey with Ebola and the risk to US residents of becoming infected with Ebola is currently very low.

**The World Health Organization has declared the Ebola outbreak to be a public health emergency. Is New Jersey considering doing the same?**

No, New Jersey is not declaring a public health emergency at this time since there are no cases of Ebola in the state.

**What is NJDOH doing to make sure we don't have a similar situation like Dallas, TX?**

The New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) has sent several health alerts to health care providers with information on symptoms to watch for in patients who have recently traveled to certain countries in West Africa. Health care providers here in NJ continue to follow standard practices so they do not come in contact with blood or body fluids of patients who might have Ebola. They are also asking sick patients about recent travel to make sure they can rule out Ebola.

Since it will take time for the Ebola outbreaks to be controlled in West Africa, the NJDOH will continue to monitor the outbreak in West Africa, work with partners such as the CDC, and provide updates to the public and health care providers as needed.

**EBOLA HEMORRHAGIC FEVER OR EBOLA VIRUS DISEASE (EBOLA) DISEASE INFORMATION**

**What is Ebola?**

Ebola is a severe, often fatal disease in humans and some animals. It is caused by an infection with a virus.

## **What are the signs and symptoms of this virus in people?**

Symptoms of Ebola include:

- Fever
- Headache
- Joint and muscle aches
- Weakness
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Stomach pain
- Lack of appetite

Some people may also have:

- Rash
- Red eyes
- Hiccups
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Chest pain
- Difficulty breathing
- Difficulty swallowing
- Bleeding inside and outside the body

## **How severe is illness associated with Ebola?**

Ebola is a severe, often fatal disease. Some people who become sick with Ebola are able to recover, while others do not. The reasons behind this are not fully understood. Recovery from Ebola is largely dependent on a patient's development of an immune response. Evidence shows that people who recover from Ebola infection develop antibodies that last for at least 10 years, possibly longer.

## **EBOLA VIRUS TRANSMISSION / INFECTIVITY**

### **Is Ebola contagious? How does it spread?**

Yes, Ebola is contagious and spreads from person to person. Ebola is spread through direct contact (through broken skin or mucous membranes in, for example, the eyes, nose, or mouth) with

- blood or body fluids (including but not limited to urine, saliva, sweat, feces, vomit, breast milk, and semen) of a person who is sick with Ebola
- objects (like needles, syringes, clothing, and bedding) that have been contaminated with the virus
- infected animals (such as bats, rodents, or primates from areas where the disease is known to exist).

You can only get Ebola from touching body fluids of someone who is currently sick with (has symptoms), or has died from, Ebola. Ebola is not spread through the air or by water, or in general, by food. However, in Africa, Ebola may be spread as a result of handling bushmeat (wild animals hunted for food) and contact with infected bats. There is no evidence that mosquitos or other insects can transmit Ebola virus. Only mammals (for example, humans, bats, monkeys, and apes) have shown the ability to become infected with and spread Ebola virus.

#### **Can Ebola be spread through coughs and sneezes?**

Unlike respiratory illnesses like measles or chickenpox, which can be transmitted by virus particles that remain suspended in the air after an infected person coughs or sneezes, Ebola is transmitted by direct contact with body fluids of a person who has symptoms of Ebola disease. Although coughing and sneezing are not common symptoms of Ebola, if a symptomatic patient with Ebola coughs or sneezes on someone, and saliva or mucus come into contact with that person's eyes, nose or mouth, these fluids may transmit the disease.

#### **Could someone become infected with Ebola if they handled a cart or doorknob that an infected person handled and in turn touched their own mouth or rubbed their eyes/had a cut on their hands?**

If a sick Ebola patient coughed or sneezed or got body fluids on a surface and those fluids were still wet, then yes. If you touched those fluids and then touched your eyes, mouth, nose or had a cut on your hand, then you could be exposed. Once body fluids are dry the virus dies.

#### **Can the Ebola virus live on surfaces, like phones, door knobs, hand railings, etc, and for how long?**

Ebola virus is killed with EPA-registered hospital disinfectants. Ebola virus dried on surfaces such as doorknobs and countertops can survive for several hours; however, virus in body fluids (such as blood) can survive up to several days at room temperature.

#### **Can I get Ebola from a coworker who recently traveled to West Africa?**

You do not need to avoid contact with someone who has recently traveled to a country where an outbreak is occurring. Ebola is spread through direct contact with blood or body fluids and is only spread when a person is showing symptoms.

Even if a person was not exposed to Ebola, travelers returning from Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Liberia are advised to monitor their health and watch for symptoms of Ebola for a period of 21 days. During the time that you are monitoring your health, you can continue your normal activities, including work.

If you get symptoms of Ebola, it is important to stay apart from other people and to call your doctor right away. Tell the doctor about your recent travel and your symptoms before you go to the doctor's office or hospital. Advance notice will help the doctor care for you and protect other people who may be in the doctor's office or hospital.

All confirmed or suspect cases of Ebola should be immediately reported to the local health department where the patient resides. A directory of local health departments is available at <http://localhealth.nj.gov>

If patient residence is unknown, report to your own local health department.

If the individual does not live in New Jersey, or if the local health department cannot be reached report the case to the New Jersey Department of Health at: 609-826-5964, or 609-392-2020 after hours.

#### **Are dogs and cats at risk of becoming sick with Ebola?**

The risk of an Ebola outbreak affecting multiple people in the United States is very low. Therefore, the risk to pets is also very low, as they would have to come into contact with blood and body fluids of a person with Ebola. Even in areas in Africa where Ebola is present, there have been no reports of dogs and cats becoming sick with Ebola.

#### **If someone survives Ebola, can he or she still spread the virus?**

Once someone recovers from Ebola, they can no longer spread the virus. However, Ebola virus has been found in semen for up to three months. People who recover from Ebola are advised to abstain from sex or use condoms for three months.

#### **What is the incubation period for Ebola?**

The incubation period is the time from when someone is exposed until they start to show symptoms. According to the CDC, the incubation period for Ebola is 2-21 days though 8-10 days is most common. If symptoms start later than 21 days after exposure, the patient likely does not have Ebola infection.

#### **Who is at highest risk for getting infected with Ebola?**

During outbreaks of Ebola, those at highest risk include health care workers and family and friends who may have unprotected, direct contact with an infected person.

### **TREATMENT**

#### **What is the treatment for people with Ebola?**

There is no specific medicine that cures people infected with Ebola. People with Ebola will receive medical care such as fluids, oxygen, blood transfusion and other medicines as needed. Early treatment is best.

#### **Is there a vaccine for Ebola?**

No, there is no vaccine to prevent Ebola.

#### **What is the experimental treatment that was used on two American relief workers who became infected?**

ZMapp, an experimental drug for use with people infected with Ebola virus, has not yet been tested in humans for safety or effectiveness. Two American relief workers received the treatment after becoming infected with the Ebola virus while providing health care in Liberia. They were then transported to a hospital in Atlanta, GA and have recovered. Since the drug is still in an experimental stage, only small quantities of the drug have been manufactured.

#### **What would we do if there was a case of Ebola in New Jersey?**

Systems are in place to identify suspected cases of Ebola. The person would be isolated and cared for at a hospital. Hospitals are well equipped to care for a person with Ebola by following normal infection control procedures.

### **How are New Jersey's hospitals equipped to deal with Ebola?**

Hospitals in New Jersey are well equipped to care for a person with possible Ebola by following normal infection control procedures. Hospital staff routinely follow procedures to prevent infections such as wearing gloves, gowns, masks, and other protective gear when caring for patients so that they don't come in contact with blood or other body fluids. These same procedures would be very carefully followed if they were caring for a patient with Ebola in the United States.

## **EBOLA TRAVEL ISSUES AND CONCERNS**

### **Can I travel to countries affected by the outbreak?**

Ebola has been reported in multiple countries in West Africa. CDC has issued a Warning, Level 3 travel notice for United States citizens to avoid all nonessential travel Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Liberia because of unprecedented outbreaks of Ebola in those countries.

If you travel to or are in an area affected by an Ebola outbreak, make sure to do the following:

- Practice careful hygiene. For example, wash your hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer and avoid contact with blood and body fluids.
- Do not handle items that may have come in contact with an infected person's blood or body fluids (such as clothes, bedding, needles, and medical equipment).
- Avoid funeral or burial rituals that require handling the body of someone who has died from Ebola.
- Avoid contact with bats and nonhuman primates or blood, fluids, and raw meat prepared from these animals.
- Avoid hospitals in West Africa where Ebola patients are being treated. The U.S. embassy or consulate is often able to provide advice on facilities.
- After you return, monitor your health for 21 days and seek medical care immediately if you develop symptoms of Ebola.

If you are planning to travel outside of the US, talk with your doctor, or make an appointment at a travel medicine specialist before leaving. More information can be found on the CDC website at <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices>

### **What if I was exposed to Ebola during my trip?**

If you were exposed to Ebola during your trip, call your doctor even if you do not have symptoms. Your doctor should evaluate your exposure level and any symptoms and consult with public health authorities to determine whether actions, such as medical evaluation and testing for Ebola, monitoring, or travel restrictions are needed. Your doctor should evaluate your exposure level and any symptoms and consult with public health authorities to determine

whether actions, such as medical evaluation and testing for Ebola, monitoring, or travel restrictions are needed.

Even if not exposed to Ebola, travelers returning from Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Liberia are advised to take the following steps:

- Monitor your health for 21 days if you were in an area with an Ebola outbreak.
  - Take your temperature every morning and evening.
  - Watch for other Ebola symptoms: severe headache, muscle pain, vomiting, diarrhea, stomach pain, or unexplained bleeding or bruising.
  - If your temperature is 100.4°F (38°C) or higher or you have any other Ebola symptoms, seek medical care immediately.
    - Tell the doctor about your recent travel and your symptoms before you go to the doctor's office or hospital. Advance notice will help the doctor care for you and protect other people who may be in the doctor's office or hospital.
    - Limit your contact with other people when you travel to the doctor; avoid public transportation.
    - Do not travel anywhere except to the doctor's office or hospital.
- During the time that you are monitoring your health, you can continue your normal activities, including work. If you get symptoms of Ebola, it is important to stay apart from other people and to call your doctor right away.

### **Why isn't there a travel ban to and from West Africa? Wouldn't that help prevent the spread of Ebola?**

The CDC does not support a travel ban to and from West Africa. Instituting a ban would isolate parts of the world and drive patients with Ebola underground. This would make it much more difficult to address the outbreak.

In addition, a U.S. citizen has the right to return to the United States. Although CDC can use several measures to prevent disease from being introduced in the United States, CDC must balance the public health risk to others with the rights of the individual.

Ebola poses no substantial risk to the U.S. general population. CDC recognizes that Ebola causes a lot of public worry and concern, but CDC's mission is to protect the health of all Americans, including those who may become ill while overseas. Ebola patients can be transported and managed safely when appropriate precautions are used.

### **Should I avoid contact with people that have recently traveled to West Africa?**

No, you do not need to avoid contact with someone who has recently traveled to a country where an outbreak is occurring. Ebola is spread through direct contact with blood or body fluids and is only spread when a person is showing symptoms. Although there are no Ebola cases in New Jersey, it is always a good idea to avoid contact with another person's blood or body fluids.

If a person who recently traveled to West Africa has symptoms of Ebola, such as fever, they should contact their health care providers and tell them about their travel history. Their health care provider will evaluate their risk for Ebola as well as other more common infections in West Africa, such as malaria and typhoid fever.

### **What is being done to prevent ill passengers in West Africa from getting on a plane?**

CDC is helping to provide screening and education in West Africa to prevent sick people from getting on planes. Airports in the affected countries are screening all outbound passengers for Ebola symptoms. The CDC is helping these countries by sending 50 additional workers to help control the outbreak.

### **What precautions are NJ airports taking?**

Beginning on October 16, staff from CDC and the Department of Homeland Security's Customs & Border Protection will escort all passengers arriving at Newark Liberty International Airport from the three West African countries battling Ebola outbreaks to a separate area of the airport to undergo screening measures. They will be observed for signs of illness, asked a series of health and exposure questions, and given information on Ebola and information on monitoring themselves for symptoms for 21 days. Their temperature will be checked, and if there's any concern about their health, they'll be referred to the local public health authority for further evaluation or monitoring.

This enhanced screening coincides with similar procedures taking effect at Washington-Dulles, Chicago-O'Hare, and Atlanta International airports, after Ebola screening was launched on Saturday, October 11 at JFK International in Queens. The five airports account for 94 percent of all U.S. arrivals from the countries where Ebola outbreaks are known to have occurred, according to the CDC.

### **What is CDC doing in the US?**

CDC has plans in place to protect against further spread of the disease. These include notification to CDC of ill passengers on a plane before arrival, investigation of ill travelers and isolation of these travelers if necessary. CDC has provided guidance to airlines for managing ill passengers and disinfecting aircraft if needed. In addition, CDC has issued many guidelines to healthcare workers about how to safely evaluate a patient who might have Ebola.

## **ADDITIONAL EBOLA INFORMATION/RESOURCES**

### **Where can I learn more?**

- The CDC website has additional information about Ebola and the current outbreak. The web address is: <http://www.cdc.gov/ebola/>
- For NJ information, go to: <http://www.nj.gov/health/cd/vhf/index.shtml>
- For a directory of NJ local health departments go to: <http://localhealth.nj.gov>