



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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ADPH issues alert to health care providers on Ebola

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Alabama Department of Public Health issued a message to primary care providers in Alabama Aug. 7 to alert them to report any suspected Ebola cases and to collect specimens from any suspected patients for testing. At this time, no Alabama residents have been tested for this severe and often fatal disease.

Ebola is characterized by sudden onset of fever and weakness that may be accompanied by other symptoms including headache, joint and muscle aches, vomiting, and diarrhea, stomach pain and lack of appetite. Since May 2014 there has been an outbreak of Ebola that has resulted in deaths in people in several West African countries.

When an Ebola infection occurs in humans, there are several ways in which the virus can be transmitted to others that include:

- Direct contact with the blood or secretions of an infected person
- Exposure to objects (such as needles) that have been contaminated with infected secretions

What can travelers do to prevent Ebola?

No vaccine or specific treatment is available for Ebola. Many people who get the disease die, so it is important to take steps to prevent Ebola. Avoid nonessential travel to Liberia, Guinea, Sierra Leone and Nigeria. If you must travel, however, please make sure to do the following:

- Practice careful hygiene. 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.
- Avoid funeral or burial rituals that require handling the body of someone who has died from Ebola.
- Avoid contact with animals or with raw meat.
- Avoid hospitals where Ebola patients are being treated. The U.S. Embassy or consulate is often able to provide advice on facilities that are suitable for your needs.
- Seek medical care immediately if you develop fever, headache, achiness, sore throat, diarrhea, vomiting, stomach pain, rash or red eyes.
- Limit your contact with other people when you travel to the doctor. Do not travel anywhere else.
- Pay attention to your health after you return.

- Monitor your health for 21 days if you were in an area with an Ebola outbreak, especially if you were in contact with blood or body fluids, items that have come in contact with blood or body fluids, animals or raw meat, or hospitals where Ebola patients are being treated.
- Tell the doctor about your recent travel and your symptoms before you go to the office or emergency room. Advance notice will help the doctor care for you and protect other people who may be in the office.

Special recommendations for health care workers

Health care workers who may be exposed to people with the disease should follow these steps:

- Wear protective clothing, including masks, gloves, gowns and eye protection.
- Practice proper infection control and sterilization measures. For more information, see “Infection Control for Viral Hemorrhagic Fevers in the African Health Care Setting.”
- Isolate Ebola patients from unprotected people.
- Avoid direct contact with the bodies of people who have died from Ebola.
- Notify health officials if you have been exposed to someone with Ebola.

All persons with onset of fever within 21 days of high-risk exposure should be tested.

For more information about Ebola, go to <http://www.cdc.gov/ebola>.