



Ebola Q & A: What is it and What is Being Done in San Diego County?

The current Ebola outbreak centers on three countries in West Africa: Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone, although further spread could occur to neighboring African countries. This flyer describes general information about Ebola, and what the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency is doing to prevent its spread, and protect its residents. Ebola does **not** pose a significant risk to the U.S. public, because of how the disease spreads.

What is Ebola?

- Ebola is a severe, often fatal disease caused by the Ebola virus. Symptoms appear within 21 days of exposure.
- People exposed to Ebola are not contagious unless they have symptoms of Ebola: fever, severe headache, muscle pain, vomiting, diarrhea, stomach pain, or unexplained bleeding or bruising.

How does Ebola spread?

Ebola spreads through direct contact with:

- An infected symptomatic person's blood or body fluids (such as saliva or urine).
- Objects (such as needles) contaminated with infected secretions.
- An infected animal, or by eating infected bushmeat.

Can Ebola be transmitted through the air?

No. Ebola is not a respiratory disease like the flu, so it is **not** transmitted through the air.

Can I get Ebola from contaminated food or water?

No. Ebola does **not** spread through food, EXCEPT through infected bushmeat.

No. Ebola does **not** spread through water.

Can I get Ebola from a person who is infected but doesn't have any symptoms?

No. People who do **not** have symptoms are **not** contagious. For Ebola to be transmitted, a person must have direct contact with a sick person with symptoms of Ebola.

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

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is assisting with active screening and education efforts in the affected countries of Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone in West Africa to prevent sick travelers from getting on planes. Also, airports in Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone are screening all outbound passengers for Ebola symptoms. Passengers are required to respond to a health questionnaire. The CDC is sending staff to the affected areas to help build capacity of local health care workers and to help bring the outbreak under control.

What screening is being done in the U.S.?

Five major U.S. international airports are screening patients coming from Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone, for fever and possible Ebola exposure, according to CDC and the Department of Homeland Security.

Screening—checking for fever—is taking place at New York's JFK International Airport, Washington-Dulles, Newark, Chicago-O'Hare, and Atlanta. More than 94 percent of the travelers from West Africa arrive via these points of entry into the U.S.

As per CDC guidance, public health authorities are performing active post-arrival monitoring of travelers whose travel originates in Guinea, Liberia, or Sierra Leone. Active post-arrival monitoring means that travelers without fever or other symptoms consistent with Ebola will be followed up daily by state and local health departments for 21 days from the date of their departure from West Africa.

What is the County of San Diego doing to protect its residents from Ebola?

The County of San Diego is doing the following:

- Working with local medical providers to identify Ebola.
- Has protocols, professional staff, and a strong network of partners to protect against further spread of disease.
- Working with the State of California and the CDC to develop guidance and tools for public health investigations, and providing recommendations for healthcare infection control to prevent disease spread.
- Sending up-to-date information to the general public, international travelers and public health partners.

(continued on back)

- Has issued a health alert to local medical providers on the importance of taking steps to prevent the spread of this virus, how to test and isolate suspected patients, and how they can protect themselves from infection.

If an Ebola case happened locally, well-trained staff would investigate and locate any recent contacts of the person. The County would need to find everyone who had direct contact with the person when they were showing symptoms and isolate contacts if they were also showing symptoms to stop the spread of the disease. Anyone who came in contact with an infected patient would be monitored for 21 days for any signs of the Ebola virus.

For more information:

- Ebola updates: www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/
- Travelers' Health: www.cdc.gov/travel
- Airline guidance: www.cdc.gov/quarantine/air/managing-sick-travelers/ebola-guidance-airlines.html