



EBOLA RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AMBULATORY CARE CENTERS

The Ebola Outbreak in West Africa continues, and health care providers should continue to remain vigilant for patients presenting with symptoms consistent with Ebola after travelling to countries with ongoing Ebola transmission. Public health has taken steps to dramatically reduce the likelihood that an at risk traveler with possible Ebola symptoms will present for care without prior notification, but a very slight possibility still exists.

Currently, IDPH is being notified of all airline travelers arriving in Iowa from Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Liberia. These travelers are being screened for symptoms and possible exposure to patients with Ebola. They are all under public health orders to monitor for symptoms (and may also be quarantined based on their level of exposure) for 21 days following their arrival. They are instructed to contact public health immediately if they experience any symptoms. These travelers are also instructed not to present to hospitals or clinics for care without contacting public health first. There are mechanisms in place to transport these patients safely and to be treated appropriately by giving prior warning to the facility that the incoming symptomatic traveler may be infected with Ebola.

Iowa Department of Public Health has developed the following recommendations:

1. **Screen all acutely ill patients for recent travel (within 21 days) to Ebola affected countries, and if yes for symptoms that could be consistent with Ebola.**

Currently, a widespread outbreak is occurring in the countries of Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Liberia in West Africa. Travelers arriving from other countries in Africa or elsewhere are not considered to be at risk for Ebola.

The symptoms of Ebola can include fever (greater than 100.4° F), severe headache, muscle pain, weakness, diarrhea, vomiting, abdominal pain, and unexplained bleeding or bruising. Symptoms may appear anywhere from 2 – 21 days after exposure, but the average is 8 – 10 days.

Patients must have both relevant travel history *and* consistent symptoms to meet the criteria for Ebola testing.

2. **If a patient has symptoms consistent with Ebola and has recently traveled (within 21 days) to Guinea, Sierra Leone, or Liberia, isolate the patient in a private exam room (ideally with a bathroom or covered commode) and call IDPH immediately (1-800-362-2736, after hours 515-323-4360).**

Ebola is spread via direct contact to the bodily fluids of an infected person. The disease is not airborne. Patients are not considered to be highly infectious during the initial stages of illness, but direct contact with the patient should be avoided. If direct contact is necessary, the minimum personal protective equipment (PPE) used should include: face shield and surgical face mask, impermeable gown, and two pairs of gloves.

IDPH will provide guidelines for patient isolation, determine if the patient meets testing criteria, and assist in transferring the patient, if required. Do not perform phlebotomy or any other procedure unless urgently required for patient care or stabilization. Keep patient hydrated.

3. **Immediately call state public health officials to discuss any questions or concerns you have about Ebola.**
IDPH: 1-800-362-2736, after hours 515-323-4360

4. **Refer to the following web sites for more information:**

www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/pdf/ambulatory-care-evaluation-of-patients-with-possible-ebola.pdf (Ambulatory Care Flow Chart)

www.idph.state.ia.us/EHI/Issue.aspx?issue=Ebola%20Outbreak&pg=Ebola%20Outbreak%20Home. (IDPH Ebola Page)

www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/index.html (CDC Ebola Page)