



Kentucky Public Health Advisory Regarding Ebola Virus Disease (EVD)

March 18, 2021

On March 4, 2021, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued a “Warning Level 3, Avoid Non-essential Travel,” notice for individuals considering travel to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Guinea because of outbreaks of Ebola virus disease (EVD). To date, no cases of EVD have been identified in Kentucky or the United States. EVD typically occurs in tropical regions of Sub-Saharan Africa and can be transmitted from person-to-person. The countries and the specific regions affected currently are the North Kivu Province of the DRC and the N’Zérékoré Prefecture of Guinea.

For EVD, the period from exposure to signs of illness, known as the incubation period, is from 2 days to 21 days. An infected person is not considered contagious until he/she begins to exhibit signs or symptoms of EVD. The first sign is usually a fever greater than 101.5°. Subsequently, there are non-specific symptoms such as fatigue and body aches, commonly followed by gastrointestinal symptoms such as vomiting, diarrhea, and abdominal pain. Other less frequent signs or symptoms may include rash and external/internal bleeding.

The CDC has issued important clinical guidance recommendations regarding EVD. For the most recent guidelines, please visit CDC’s website <http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/>.

To report an individual with suspected or confirmed EVD in Kentucky, please immediately contact a public health professional at your local or state health department. After-hours, on weekends, and during holidays, telephone reports can be made to KDPH at 888-9-REPORT (888-973-7678). Healthcare personnel who wish to send laboratory tests to the CDC for EVD testing should contact the state public health laboratory (Division of Laboratory Services) at 502-564-4446 after consultation with public health authorities.

For more information on the current outbreaks and guidance for travelers and healthcare workers, please visit:

<https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices/warning/ebola-democratic-republic-of-the-congo>

<https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices/warning/ebola-guinea>



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Kentucky Department for Public Health (KDPH) Recommendations for Enhanced Infection Control Strategies in Healthcare Settings When Providing Care for Patients with Suspected or Confirmed Ebola Virus Disease

Kentucky healthcare facilities should review and update preparedness plans to assure that those plans include administrative controls, environmental controls, and respiratory-protection controls when providing care for patients with suspected or confirmed EVD. The CDC has a reminder for effective screening, titled: "[Early recognition is critical for infection control: Think Ebola.](#)" For an example of a thorough travel history for those travelers returning from affected countries who present with a fever, refer to the [CDC Yellow Book Chapter 11: Post-Travel Evaluation](#).

The CDC has made [infection prevention and control recommendations for hospitalized patients under investigation \(PUIs\) for Ebola Virus Disease in U.S. Hospitals](#). Current guidelines to prevent transmission of EVD include, at a minimum, implementation of standard, contact, and droplet precautions. KDPH recommends that all hospitals in Kentucky adhere to these guidelines when managing patients with suspected or confirmed EVD. CDC information about the different levels of risk for contact to a known case of EVD is in the [CDC's Case Definition for EVD](#).

Given the high mortality associated with EVD, hospitals may consider having healthcare personnel (HCP) use a higher level of personal protective equipment (PPE) than the minimum measures described in the CDC guidance. Hospitals may also consider using more stringent isolation precautions, including the use of airborne infection isolation rooms (AIIR) in anticipation of the need for aerosol-generating procedures.

Facilities that choose to use a higher level of PPE or more stringent isolation procedures than those described in the CDC guidance should ensure that policies and procedures are developed and that all HCP are properly trained in the correct use of the PPE that is provided, including respirators; and facilities should comply with all applicable regulations concerning the use of such equipment (e.g., the OSHA respiratory protection standard, [29 CFR 1910.134](#)).

Facilities that choose to use enhanced PPE or isolation precautions should be aware that the introduction of new, unfamiliar equipment or procedures could increase the likelihood of errors that could result in HCP exposure to Ebola virus. Facilities should use equipment and procedures that staff have been trained on and are familiar with, given that they provide the level of protection deemed necessary for the given situation. ***Facilities that choose to use new equipment or procedures should conduct training to assure the proficiency of staff in the use of new PPE equipment or enhanced isolation precautions before they are introduced in new patient care settings.***

Questions about prevention and control of healthcare associated infections can be directed to the KDPH Healthcare-associated Infection Prevention Program and/or Reportable Disease Section at (502) 564-3261.