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GAVIN NEWSOM
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Health Alert:

**Monitoring Travelers Returning from the Democratic Republic of Congo or Guinea
in the Setting of Ongoing Ebola Virus Disease Outbreaks**
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The California Department of Public Health (CDPH), in collaboration with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), has been closely monitoring the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) outbreaks in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Guinea. The DRC Ministry of Health declared the EVD outbreak on February 7, 2021 and to date has reported 11 confirmed cases in the North Kivu province. Guinea declared an outbreak of EVD on February 14, 2021 in the Nzérékoré Region that borders Liberia, and to date there have been 17 cases and 4 deaths. The World Health Organization (WHO) is assisting both countries with investigations, therapeutics and vaccination. To date, there are no cases of EVD in the United States.

The risk for importation of Ebola virus into California remains very low. However, infectious diseases are regularly introduced into the state by returning California residents and travelers from all over the world. CDPH continues to remind healthcare providers in hospitals, emergency departments, and clinics to routinely ask patients with signs or symptoms of acute and possibly infectious illness about recent international travel.

The CDC has announced that travelers returning to the United States from the DRC and Guinea will need to be screened for symptoms and risk factors for EVD at disembarking airports. Travelers' information will be collected by CDC and transmitted to states and local public health departments so that these passengers can be monitored and triaged quickly to appropriate medical care if needed within their 21-day monitoring period. Risk factors for EVD include traveling to an EVD-affected area and having an EVD exposure which may include taking care of an ill patient or a sick loved one or attending a funeral. EVD symptoms include fever, headache, abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, muscle aches, and unexplained bleeding. Some of these symptoms overlap with other infectious diseases including flu, malaria, typhoid fever, and COVID-19. Of note, persons who do not have symptoms are not contagious for EVD. Ebola virus is transmissible via bodily fluids or objects contaminated with bodily fluids from persons ill with EVD. EVD has an incubation period of up to 21 days and thus travelers will be monitored for up to 21 days.

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The CDPH recommends the following:

For healthcare providers and facilities:

- Implement appropriate infection control procedures in all settings. Travel history can inform specific infection control measures needed if there is suspicion of an infectious disease including EVD. Healthcare and Emergency Medical System providers should routinely ask patients with acute and possibly infectious illness about recent travel.
- If there is suspicion of EVD in a patient based on travel history and clinical presentation, the healthcare provider should be advised to take EVD specific precautions. These precautions include: immediate isolation of the patient in a private room with an in-room bathroom or covered bedside commode, and rapid notification of their LHD, if not already done. Healthcare provider contact with the patient should be limited to providing essential patient care; any persons having contact with the patient should practice appropriate precautions and use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). All healthcare provider contact should be rigorously documented. bathroom or covered bedside commode, and rapid notification of their LHD, if not already done. Healthcare provider contact with the patient should be limited to providing essential patient care; any persons having contact with the patient should practice appropriate precautions and use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). All healthcare provider contact should be rigorously documented.

For Local Health Departments (LHDs):

- Immediately notify CDPH of any patients suspected of having EVD or other highly infectious illnesses due to special pathogens. Additional LHD guidance may be found in [CDPH Guidance for Suspect Ebola Virus Disease](http://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/CDPH%20Document%20Library/CDPHSuspectEbolaGuidance.pdf) (www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/CDPH%20Document%20Library/CDPHSuspectEbolaGuidance.pdf).
- If a LHD becomes aware of a traveler returning from the affected region of the DRC or Guinea, including persons who provided healthcare to EVD patients, interview the traveler and perform a risk assessment. CDPH is available to help with the risk assessment. LHDs should notify the CDPH of all returning travelers who have been to an Ebola-affected region of the DRC or Guinea or who had provided healthcare to EVD patients.
- Based on the risk assessment, the LHD should develop a plan with the traveler as to whom to notify should the person become ill. If the LHD decides to implement active monitoring, the LHD should provide a daily contact for the traveler.
- In the unlikely event of a returning traveler with a potential unprotected Ebola exposure, implement active monitoring, and notify CDPH to discuss whether other restrictions or assessments may be warranted.

For travelers coming to California from areas with active Ebola virus transmission:

- Self-monitor for fever and other symptoms of EVD, which include severe headache, muscle pain, weakness, fatigue, diarrhea, vomiting, stomach pain, and unexplained bleeding during the 21 days after leaving an EVD-affected area.
- Notify the LHD when you arrive if you have not already been contacted by the LHD.

- Contact your LHD and seek medical care immediately if you develop symptoms of EVD.
- Before going to the doctor's office, emergency room, or other clinical setting, contact the doctor or other healthcare provider and inform them about the recent travel and symptoms. This will help healthcare providers prepare their facility and protect other people.
- If you have questions about EVD symptoms or self-monitoring, contact your LHD.

Additional Resources:

[CDPH Guidance for Local Health Departments](#)

[CDPH Guidance for Healthcare Providers](#)

[CDPH Guidance for the Public](#)

[CDC Ebola Virus Disease](#)

[WHO Guinea Ebola Virus Outbreak](#)