



Guidelines for Urgent Care and Private Practice Practitioners regarding Suspected Ebola Patients. (updated 10/21/2014)

The recent confirmed case in Dallas County does not represent a significant increased risk for the general community. However, as the Ebola epidemic in Africa is likely to continue for months, all clinicians should be prepared to evaluate a febrile traveler from affected countries. These guidelines are meant for primary care physicians and free standing clinics.

Background: Ebola, a viral disease, is endemic to Africa with sporadic outbreaks that have occurred since the virus was first described in 1976. It is spread by contact with bodily fluids from a symptomatic Ebola patient. It is not an airborne transmitted disease. Use of standard, contact, and droplet precautions is considered effective in preventing transmission and should be used for patients suspected to have Ebola virus disease.

Guidance: Establish a routine process to immediately ask any patient presenting with subjective or documented fever (≥ 100.4) about travel and contact history. Inquire about travel to Sierra Leone, Guinea, Liberia, or contact to a known Ebola case in Dallas within the last 21 days. If travel or contact history is positive, then isolate the patient to a single exam room and limit contact with other staff and patients. If the person is coughing or sneezing, give them a surgical mask to wear. All staff with subsequent contact with the patient should use a mask, eye protection, gloves and a fluid impermeable gown if available.

Epidemiologic Risk Factors: Obtain a thorough history of travel, contact with sick persons that have a fever-type illness in the previous 21 days, and any known history of malaria or malarial treatment. Inquire if the person has had direct handling of bats or a non-human primate while in Africa, have cared for ill persons with a febrile illness, or has participated in funeral rites.

If the patient has not had traveled to Sierra Leon, Guinea or Liberia, inquire about contact with one of the known Ebola cases from Dallas. Please note that a person who lives with a "Contact" and has not been exposed to an Ebola "Case" is considered a "No Risk Person" for transmission. This "No Risk Person" is often referred to as contact-of-a-"Contact".

Physical Assessment: Include whether the patient has malaise, headache, muscle pain, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, rash, or unexplained hemorrhage along with the fever duration.

Notify the local hospital emergency room (ER) physician that you have a suspect patient for POSSIBLE Ebola that will be referred to their facility. Make sure you are referring your patient to a facility with an ICU and isolation capability.

Ideally, the patient should be transported by ambulance to the hospital. EMS personnel should be informed of the possibility of Ebola so that they may take appropriate precautions.

Notify the Tarrant County Public Health Epidemiology Division at (817) 321-5350 during business hours or (817) 994-3708 during non-business hours. The epidemiologist will need patient demographics and assessment information to facilitate patient access to healthcare and for follow up if the patient does not arrive at the notified facility. Please compile a list of staff members and other patients in your waiting area who had direct contact with the patient prior to being isolated while in your facility. The health department may use this list for trace back purposes if the diagnosis of Ebola virus disease is confirmed.

After the patient has left, use a disinfectant to clean the exam room and any other facilities (i.e. bathrooms) that the patient had contact. An EPA-registered hospital disinfectant with label claims for non-enveloped viruses (e.g., norovirus, rotavirus, adenovirus, poliovirus) and instructions for cleaning and decontaminating surfaces or objects soiled with blood or body fluids should be used according to those instructions. Any trash, gloves, PPE, or other items that the patient touched should be placed in biohazard containers as medical waste.

For other guidance documents and information, please refer to our website and click on the "Ebola" link on the right of the page at <http://www.tarrantcounty.com/eHealth/site/default.asp>