

# Low Health Threat in Los Angeles County: Addressing the Concerns of Non Acute Care Facilities

## 1. What is Ebola?

Ebola is a rare disease that has caused outbreaks (more disease than usual) in West Africa. Right now, there is a large Ebola outbreak in countries like Guinea (GIH-nee), Sierra Leone (see-air-uh-lee-“OWN”), and Liberia (ly-BEER-ee-uh). The number of affected countries may grow.

See a map of affected countries on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) website: <http://tinyurl.com/CDCEbolaMap>

## 2. How does Ebola spread?

Ebola spreads from person-to-person by direct contact with a patient’s body fluids, like sweat, saliva, mucus, blood, vomit, urine, feces, breast milk, and semen. Infected objects, like needles, can also spread it. Ebola can also spread after death, especially if touching an infected person’s corpse or handling linens, mattresses, or other objects that may be contaminated.

Patients can spread the virus while they have a fever or other symptoms. The virus gets into the body through broken skin or mucous membranes (spongy skin like the kind in your eyes, nose, or mouth). People who do not show any symptoms do not spread Ebola. Ebola does not spread through air, food, water, mosquitos, or other insects. Only mammals, like humans, bats, apes, or monkeys, have been infected with Ebola.

## 3. What are the symptoms of Ebola?

It takes 8–10 days for most people to get symptoms, but it can range from 2–21 days. Ebola can cause these signs of disease:

- Severe headache
- Fever
- Weakness or muscle pain
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Stomach pain
- Lack of appetite
- Unexplained blood loss or bleeding
- Delirium (confusion)
- Erratic behavior (e.g. flailing, staggering)

## 4. How is Ebola treated?

There is no specific medicine, treatment, or vaccine for Ebola. Instead, treatment focuses on keeping the patient alive by giving fluids and managing the serious health problems that can happen.

## 5. Does Ebola pose a health risk to LA County?

The risk of Ebola is very low unless a person has direct unprotected contact with the blood or body fluids of an Ebola patient or directly handles bats, apes, or monkeys from areas with Ebola outbreaks. Using effective infection control practices, like wearing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), helps prevent the spread of the illness.



## Ebola Case Definitions

- **Suspected Ebola case:**  
An individual with a fever *and* recent travel to West African countries with Ebola outbreaks or contact with another known Ebola case
- **Confirmed Ebola case:**  
An individual whose blood has tested positive for the Ebola virus

## Where can the public go for more information?

Los Angeles County,  
Department of Public Health  
Dial 2-1-1

California Department of  
Public Health  
(916) 558-1784

Centers for Disease Control  
and Prevention  
1-800-CDC-INFO  
1-800-232-4636

## An Ebola Reference for Non Acute Care Facilities

### 6. What should clinic staff do if they suspect a client has Ebola symptoms?

Ask patients with symptoms about their risk factors for Ebola within the past three weeks:

- Living in, or travel from, a West African country where an Ebola outbreak is happening
- Contact with blood or other body fluids of a patient known or suspected to have Ebola
- Direct handling of bats, apes, or monkeys from areas where the disease is more common

If a client has any of these risk factors, staff should put on PPE, isolate the patient, and call their local health department immediately.

### 7. What is Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and when should clinic staff wear it?

Standard, contact, and droplet precautions, such as:

- Gloves
- Facemask
- Eye protection (goggles or face shield)
- Gown (fluid resistant or impermeable)
- Other items including double gloving, disposable shoe covers, and leg coverings in certain situations (e.g., large amounts of blood and body fluids present)

Staff should wear PPE if someone shows symptoms and has a higher risk of getting sick with Ebola. For more information about Ebola-related procedures for putting on, taking off, and getting rid of PPE, see the following website for CDC's Guidance: <http://tinyurl.com/PPESequence>

### 8. How should suspected or confirmed Ebola patients be isolated?

- Put the patient in a room by themselves (with a private bathroom, if possible) and keep the door closed
- Keep a list of who goes into the patient room, and limit the number of people who have patient contact
- Limit activities that increase the risk of exposure (e.g. airway management, CPR, use of needles)

### 9. Will clinic staff be alerted if an Ebola case is confirmed in LA County?

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health will notify the public if an Ebola case is confirmed. Public Health will also alert any person who had contact with the patient.

### Where can clinic staff go for more information?



**Consult with and Report Suspect Cases to the County Health Department**  
**Los Angeles County Acute Communicable Disease Control**  
(213) 240-7941 (8 am to 5 pm, M-F) or (213) 974-1234 after hours

**Report Suspect Cases to City Health Departments**  
**Pasadena Health Department:** (626) 744-6043  
**Long Beach Health Department:** (562) 570-4302