

CDC Announces Active Post-Arrival Monitoring for Travelers from Impacted Countries

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) announced that public health authorities will begin active post-arrival monitoring of travelers whose travel originates in Liberia, Sierra Leone, or Guinea. These travelers are now arriving to the United States at one of five airports where entry screening is being conducted by Customs and Border Protection and CDC. Active post-arrival monitoring means that travelers without febrile illness or symptoms consistent with Ebola will be followed up daily by state and local health departments for 21 days from the date of their departure from West Africa. Six states (New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, New Jersey, and Georgia), where approximately 70% of incoming travelers are headed, have already taken steps to plan and implement active post-arrival monitoring which will begin on Monday, October 27. Active post-arrival monitoring will begin in the remaining states in the days following. CDC is providing assistance with active post-arrival monitoring to state and local health departments, including information on travelers arriving in their states, and upon request, technical support, consultation and funding.

Active post-arrival monitoring is an approach in which state and local health officials maintain daily contact with all travelers from the three affected countries for the entire 21 days following their last possible date of exposure to Ebola virus. Twenty-one days is the longest time it can take from the time a person is infected with Ebola until that person has symptoms of Ebola.

Specifically, state and local authorities will require travelers to report the following information daily: their temperature and the presence or absence of other Ebola symptoms such as headache, joint and muscle aches, weakness, diarrhea, vomiting, stomach pain, lack of appetite, or abnormal bleeding; and their intent to travel in-state or out-of-state. In the event a traveler does not report in, state or local public health officials will take immediate steps to locate the individual to ensure that active monitoring continues on a daily basis.

In addition, travelers will receive a CARE (Check And Report Ebola) kit at the airport that contains a tracking log and pictorial description of symptoms, a thermometer, guidance for how to monitor with thermometer, a wallet card on who to contact if they have symptoms and that they can present to a health care provider, and a health advisory infographic on monitoring health for three weeks.

Active monitoring establishes daily contact between public health officials and travelers from the affected region. In the event a traveler begins to show symptoms, public health officials will implement an isolation and evaluation plan following appropriate protocols to limit exposure, and direct the individual to a local hospital that has been trained to receive potential Ebola patients.

Post arrival monitoring is an added safeguard that complements the existing exit screening protocols, which require all outbound passengers from the affected West African countries to be screened for fever, Ebola symptoms, and contact with Ebola and enhanced screening protocols at the five U.S. airports that will now receive all travelers from the affected countries. All three of these nations have asked for, and continue to receive, CDC assistance implementing exit screening.