

These Questions and Answers on Ebola for Travellers have been developed in the context of the 2014 Ebola epidemic in west Africa.

Ebola virus disease and Travellers

Updated: 27 November 2014

Is it safe to travel to west Africa during an outbreak?

The Australian Government is currently advising Australians to reconsider their need to travel to Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia, where there is widespread transmission of Ebola. An unrelated outbreak of EVD in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has now been declared over.

While travellers should always be vigilant with regard to their health and those around them, the risk of infection for travellers is very low since person-to-person transmission results from direct contact with the body fluids or secretions of an infected patient.

Please see the www.smarttraveller.gov.au website for further details on travel advice.

What do I do if I am traveling to an area where the outbreak is occurring?

For people travelling to an area affected by the 2014 Ebola outbreak, protect yourself by doing the following:

- Wash hands frequently or use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser
- Avoid contact with blood or body fluids of any person, particularly someone who is sick
- Do not touch the body of someone who has died from Ebola and avoid funeral services
- Avoid contact with bats and nonhuman primates and do not touch or eat raw meat prepared from these animals
- Avoid hospitals in west Africa where Ebola patients are being treated unless necessary
- Seek medical care immediately if you develop fever and any of the following symptoms: headache, muscle pain, diarrhoea, vomiting, stomach pain, or unexplained bruising or bleeding (if in Australia, please call 1800 186 815 first)

Remember that there are many health risks other than Ebola for travellers to countries in west Africa, including malaria and Yellow Fever. See your local doctor or travel clinic at least four weeks before travel to review health precautions and get any appropriate vaccinations.

What border screening measures are in place?

People arriving from west Africa will be screened at the border with a series of risk assessment questions and temperature check. High risk exposures or fever will be referred directly to public health authorities. From November 14 all arrivals will also be provided with an information sheet with a national HealthDirect phone number to contact in case of illness and be routinely contacted by the local public health unit to review their Ebola risk.

Will aid workers returning from west Africa be placed under quarantine?

Aid workers returning from west Africa will be assessed and monitored by local public health authorities to ensure their health and the safety of others. The recommendations are for aid workers to monitor their temperature twice daily, perform no clinical work and avoid going to crowded areas during the 21 day incubation period. Additional restrictions may be recommended if

aid workers have had higher risk exposures. Routine home quarantine of people with no symptoms is not recommended.

Will all travellers from west Africa be placed under quarantine?

NSW Health is working closely with border protection partners to identify people returning from countries with widespread Ebola transmission. Arrivals from affected countries in West Africa will be assessed and monitored by local public health authorities to ensure their health and the safety of others. Recommendations about avoiding crowded places, work, school or travel will depend on the level of risk. Routine home quarantine of people with no symptoms is not recommended.