

Ebola: reducing the risk of transmission



As long as the epidemic of Ebola virus disease is continuing and expanding in West Africa, the risk of importation of contagious cases to European and other countries increases. The risk of further transmission in Europe is extremely low, but cannot be excluded. To minimise this risk, public health efforts in the EU focus on early case detection and isolation.

Exit screening

Passengers departing from affected countries have their temperature checked to prevent a contagious case from boarding a plane.



- Person at risk
- Person not at risk
- Infected, asymptomatic person (not infectious)
- Infectious sick person
- Contact tracing
- Isolation
- Movement

Information to travellers
At the point of entry, travellers coming from affected areas are informed about the disease and advised to seek medical care if they experience symptoms.

From first symptoms to detection
The incubation period ranges from 2 to 21 days. As soon as symptoms appear, people become infectious and can spread the virus to others. People can only get infected if they come in contact with contaminated blood or bodily fluids. Healthcare workers and close contacts are therefore at higher risk of getting infected. Identifying infectious sick persons as soon as possible ensures that the chain of transmission is stopped.

Travelling from affected areas
An infected person not experiencing symptoms is not contagious and therefore does not pose a risk to other travellers.

Putting medical staff on alert
Frontline medical staff asks patients about recent travel. Patients with a compatible travel history and Ebola-like symptoms are immediately isolated.

Possibility of infection

Contact tracing
Identifying and following-up those who had contact with an ill person is essential to prevent the spread of the disease.

Medical evacuation
Patients are safely isolated during medical evacuation and do not pose a risk to others.

Healthcare facilities
Infected patients are isolated under vigorous infection control measures.

