



Frequently Asked Questions: People under Monitoring for Ebola

Updated November 5, 2014

What is Oregon doing to monitor people at risk for Ebola?

Oregon public health officials are following federal [CDC guidance](#) for monitoring and movement of people with potential Ebola virus exposure.

- Local health departments will be in contact with returning healthcare workers and travelers from [affected areas](#).
- Public health officials will create a plan to monitor the person's health for 21 days after the last possible exposure to Ebola. The plan is based on the person's [risk level](#).
- The plan will include daily monitoring for [symptoms](#) and may include restrictions on public activities or travel.

Why is monitoring needed?

Ebola cannot be spread before [symptoms](#) appear. Monitoring ensures that people at risk for Ebola who develop symptoms are isolated quickly and cared for safely, without putting the public at risk.

Is anyone being monitored in Oregon now?

As of November 5, six people were under monitoring. This number will change as new people begin monitoring and others finish the 21 day monitoring period.

Who gets monitored?

Anyone in Oregon with a risk for Ebola will be monitored. This includes:

- Returning healthcare workers who provided care to Ebola patients;
- Anyone who had contact with a known Ebola patient when they were showing symptoms;
- People who have traveled to an [affected area](#) within the past 21 days.

For more information about who is at risk for Ebola, see [Ebola: Know Your Risk \(pdf\)](#).

How are people monitored?

People under monitoring are given a kit that includes a thermometer. They are asked to take their temperature two times a day and to look for any [symptoms](#) of Ebola. If they develop symptoms, they are asked to notify public health officials right away.

In addition, public health officials check in with each person under monitoring at least once a day. For people at higher risk, this monitoring is done by direct observation (called "direct active monitoring"). For people with a lower risk, this monitoring could be done by phone (called "active monitoring").

How long are people monitored?

People are monitored for 21 days after the last possible exposure to Ebola. For travelers who have been to an [affected country](#), this means 21 days after leaving the country.

Can people under monitoring travel or go to public places?

Each person under monitoring talks with public health officials to find out their risk. The public health authority may require restrictions on travel and public activities based on the person's history, including how likely it is that they were exposed to Ebola, the number of days since they might have been exposed, and if they are following the monitoring plan as required.

Possible restrictions include, but are not limited to:

- Not taking trips by airplane, ship, or train;
- Not using public transportation;
- Not going to public places where people gather.

For more information on risk levels and possible restrictions, see [Oregon Public Health: Interim Ebola Monitoring Plan \(pdf\)](#).

What should I do if I have contact with a person under monitoring?

Remember that Ebola cannot be spread before symptoms appear. Monitoring ensures that people at risk for Ebola who develop symptoms are isolated quickly and cared for safely, without putting the public at risk.

If a person does develop symptoms and is diagnosed with Ebola, public health officials will follow up with anyone who had contact with that person while he or she had symptoms to decide if they need to be monitored.

What if a person doesn't want to be monitored or doesn't stay in touch with public health officials?

If a person chooses not to voluntarily communicate with public health officials every day, public health officials may issue a mandatory monitoring order to compel the individual to report his or her temperature and any symptoms according to the monitoring plan. This protects the traveler's health as well as the community.

What happens if a person under monitoring develops symptoms?

If a person under monitoring develops symptoms, the [local health department](#) will be notified right away. The person will be quickly isolated, evaluated, and moved to an appropriate healthcare facility if needed.

If the person is diagnosed with Ebola, public health officials will follow up with anyone who had contact with that person while he or she had symptoms to decide if they need to be monitored.

Healthcare workers treating Ebola patients overseas are heroes. Will they be treated fairly in this process?

Returning healthcare workers are, indeed, heroes. They are worthy of being treated with dignity and respect. Their efforts, along with civilian and military personnel, are what will ultimately control the outbreak at its source and stop the threat of more Ebola cases in the United States. Public health authorities in Oregon are following federal [CDC guidance](#) for monitoring people with an Ebola risk. Any use of public health orders in Oregon, like restrictions on public activities and travel, will be fair and ethical.

Learn more

[CDC website: Questions and answers about CDC's Ebola monitoring and movement guidance](#)