

Ebola - Five simple steps for GPs to follow

The Ebola outbreak in West Africa has claimed thousands of lives. While the risk in the UK remains low, GPs need to be prepared for a person who may have Ebola presenting at their practice. Your role is to carry out the initial verbal assessment of the patient.

If a patient telephones to say they are unwell and have visited an [affected area](#) in the past 21 days or reports a fever of 37.5°C or above or has a history of fever within the past 24 hours, don't visit or invite the patient to surgery but **follow these five simple steps**:

1. Call the patient immediately to confirm travel history and gather further clinical details.
2. Discuss the case with the local microbiologist/virologist/infectious diseases consultant and take their advice about further assessment of your patient. If they meet the criteria for possible Ebola, refer them to the local emergency department for clinical assessment.
3. Inform the emergency department so they can prepare a safe patient assessment area.
4. For the transfer to hospital, alert the ambulance service to the possibility of Ebola so they can prepare the vehicle and appropriate Personal Protective Equipment.
5. Alert the local Public Health England local health protection team.

If a patient attends your surgery, isolate them in a single side room immediately. You should then:

1. Clinically assess the patient without any physical contact.
2. Confirm travel history and/or whether the patient reports being unwell or has a fever of 37.5°C or above or history of fever within the past 24 hours.
3. **Follow the same steps as if the patient has telephoned.**

Once the patient has been transferred, any potentially contaminated areas (including the room in which the patient was isolated, any toilet they used etc.) should not be used until a diagnosis of Ebola has been excluded. This may take twelve hours. Advice on decontaminating premises can be sought from the Public Health England local health protection team.

Links to extra content:

- Clinical management and guidance for health professionals on GOV.UK:
[Ebola virus disease: managing patients who require assessment in primary care](#)
[Ebola: infection prevention and control for primary care](#)
- RCGP Ebola resources page for GPs and practice teams – this includes a series of index cards aimed at individual members of the GP practice team, outlining their specific responsibilities should a patient present with possible Ebola symptoms:
<http://www.rcgp.org.uk/clinical-and-research/clinical-resources/ebola.aspx>