



Health Advisory Emerging Diseases Associated with Travel

Minnesota Department of Health Wed May 21 12:30 CDT 2014

Action Steps:

Local and tribal health departments: Please forward to hospitals and clinics in your jurisdiction.

Hospitals and clinics: Please forward to healthcare professionals, particularly those in urgent care and emergency departments.

Healthcare providers:

- Obtain a travel history immediately during the evaluation process for patients presenting with fever, respiratory symptoms, or rash;
- If the patient has a recent history of international travel, place immediately in an airborne infection isolation room, or if unavailable a private room with closed door;
- Use appropriate level of infection control precautions including personal protective equipment if diseases spread via airborne transmission are suspected;
- If evaluating a patient suspected to have any of these or other emerging novel diseases, call the Minnesota Department of Health at 1-877-676-5414 (toll-free) or 651-201-5414 for possible testing and/or infection control guidance.

In the last several weeks to months there have been multiple instances of imported cases of MERS (Middle East Respiratory Syndrome), measles, and other travel-associated diseases to the United States including Minnesota. Two MERS cases were recently diagnosed in Indiana and Florida. Both cases were travelers from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. A third person apparently became infected through face-to-face contact in the community with the Indiana case. MERS has a case fatality rate estimated to be 30percent. The Minnesota Department of Health has tested 18 suspect MERS cases to date, all in travelers from the Arabian Peninsula or other countries which have reported MERS cases. Standard, Contact, and Airborne precautions, as well as eye protection, are recommended for management of patients with suspect or confirmed MERS infection.

The United States is seeing more measles than usual including two recent cases reported in Minnesota residents who had traveled internationally or were exposed due to travel. Due to its highly infectious nature, patients with suspect measles should be isolated immediately.

In April, a Minnesota resident was hospitalized with Lassa fever, after returning from Liberia. Lassa fever is a viral hemorrhagic fever with a high mortality rate that can be spread person-to-person in a health care setting.

H7N9 influenza continues to circulate in China with more than 440 cases; approximately 22 percent have died. H5N1 influenza also continues to circulate in birds and humans in multiple countries. In January, a traveler returning from China was diagnosed in Canada and later died.

If evaluating a patient suspected to have any of these or other emerging novel diseases, call the Minnesota Department of Health at 1-877-676-5414 (toll-free) or 651-201-5414 for possible testing and/or infection control guidance.

Resources:

- Additional information about MERS including the latest Interim Guidance for Health Professionals is available <http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/mers>.
- Additional information on avian and other novel influenza is at: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/avianflu/index.htm>
- Updated measles information including travel-related information is at: <http://www.cdc.gov/measles/index.html>