

Guide for Clinicians Evaluating an Ill Person for a Special Pathogen



HEALTH FACILITY

Ill person presents to healthcare facility

Screening questions for a special pathogen

Within the incubation period of a special pathogen, has the patient ...

- Been in contact with a person who had a suspected or confirmed infection with a special pathogen or any object contaminated by their body fluids?
- Been to an area with an active outbreak of a disease caused by a special pathogen, or where special pathogens are endemic?
- Has patient worked in a laboratory that handles special pathogens?

Patient answers YES to one or more screening questions

Patient answers NO to all screening questions

Is patient experiencing fever ($\geq 100.4^{\circ}\text{F}/38.0^{\circ}\text{C}$) without use of antipyretics and any of the following symptoms?

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Severe headache • Muscle and/or joint pain • Weakness and fatigue • Cough/difficulty breathing • Sore throat • Loss of appetite • Gastrointestinal symptoms, including abdominal pain, diarrhea, and vomiting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chest pain • Encephalitis • Acute hearing loss • Unexplained bleeding or bruising, including bleeding outside a normal menstrual cycle • Red eyes, skin rash, and hiccups • A concerning constellation of other signs and symptoms |
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The patient answers no to all screening questions. Continue with routine evaluation and care

If concern remains, consult State, Tribal, Local, or Territorial Public Health Department for additional guidance.

YES

NO

Isolate and Inform[†]

- Isolate patient at a healthcare facility in a single room with private bathroom/covered bedside commode.
- Adhere to infection prevention and control (IPC) procedures to prevent transmission, including wearing appropriate personal protective equipment.
- Use only essential healthcare workers trained in their designated roles and keep a log of all people entering the patient's room.
- Notify facility's IPC program.

The patient is not exhibiting signs and symptoms compatible with a special pathogen. Continue with routine evaluation and care.

If concern remains, consult State, Tribal, Local, or Territorial Public Health Department for additional guidance.

Contact State, Tribal, Local, or Territorial Public Health Department for Testing Recommendations

Did the patient ...

- Receive pre-travel vaccinations?
- Adhere to their malaria prophylaxis regimen if they traveled to a malaria-endemic country?
- Report any illness/death in travel companions or other contacts?

Preceding illness onset, did the patient ...

- Have contact with someone who was sick or died, or with any object(s) contaminated by their body fluids?
- Work in a healthcare facility in an area with an active outbreak of a special pathogen, or where these pathogens are endemic?
- Experience a breach in IPC precautions that may have resulted in contact with the body fluids of a patient with suspected or confirmed disease due to a special pathogen?
- Have contact with the body fluids of a person who recovered from a disease due to a special pathogen – urine, saliva, sweat, vomit, breast milk, amniotic fluid, or semen?

Preceding illness onset, did the patient ...

- Visit a healthcare facility or traditional healer (as a visitor or patient) while in an area with an active outbreak of a special pathogen, or where these pathogens are endemic?
- Attend or participate in funeral rituals, including the preparation of bodies for funeral/burial?
- Have contact with bats, pigs, rodents, camels, or other livestock or wild animals in an area with an active outbreak of a special pathogen, or where these pathogens are endemic?
- Handle or consume raw meat or other products harvested from animals originating from an area with an active outbreak of a special pathogen, or where these pathogens are endemic?
- Receive a tick bite in an area with an active outbreak of a special pathogen, or where these pathogens are endemic?
- Consume raw date palm sap originating from an area with an active outbreak of a special pathogen, or where these pathogens are endemic?
- Work or spend time in a mine/cave in an area with an active outbreak of a special pathogen, or where these pathogens are endemic?

As a resource for State, Tribal, Local, or Territorial public health departments, CDC is available 24/7 for consultation 770-488-7100

CONSULTATION

TESTING

Decision is made to test for a special pathogen

- Test for other causes of illness[†]
- Determine if patient requires transfer to a higher tier facility[†]

Perform routine laboratory testing to monitor the patient's clinical status.

Use lab equipment with closed tube systems where the specimen container remains capped during testing. Centrifuges should have sealed buckets or sealed rotors that are loaded in a biosafety cabinet (BSC). After centrifugation, open the sealed buckets or rotors inside a BSC or enclosed hood.

Malaria is the leading cause of travel-related hospitalization and death. Perform malaria testing in any patient with a febrile illness who recently returned from a malaria-endemic country, irrespective of adherence to malaria prophylaxis.

Decisions about testing for most special pathogens will be coordinated by the State, Tribal, Local, or Territorial public health department in coordination with CDC. For many special pathogens, testing is only available at CDC or select laboratories within the Laboratory Response Network.

Decision is made NOT to test for a special pathogen

Follow up clinical consultation is recommended to review the patient's clinical status and laboratory test results and to discuss discontinuation of VHF-specific IPC measures.

[†] Guidance and other resources:

Diagnoses for Consideration in a Returning Traveler with Fever: <https://archive.cdc.gov/#/details?url=https://www.cdc.gov/vhf/abroad/diagnosis-considered-returning-traveler.html>

Viral hemorrhagic fever: <https://www.cdc.gov/vhf/index.html>

Middle East Respiratory Syndrome: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/mers/>