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Imported Lassa Fever Case in New Jersey: Updated Guidance for Air Passengers Traveling from London to Newark on August 24

The 38-year old man who died of Lassa fever in a New Jersey hospital traveled to the United States from Liberia via London. Further progress has been made in identifying passengers at risk of exposure to Lassa fever during travel on Continental Flight 29, which departed London Gatwick Airport on August 24 and arrived in Newark, N.J., at 3:20 pm on August 24.

The plane was a Boeing 777-200, which has seats configured in groups of 3 with 9 seats and two aisles in each row. The case patient was seated in seat 21L, which is a window seat in economy class. Passengers seated within a six-foot radius of the case patient (i.e., passengers seated in seats F, J, K, L in rows 19-23) are considered at low risk for potential exposure, based on guidance outlined in the CDC HAN issued September 2, 2004.

The airline has provided CDC the names of passengers who occupied seats 19 F-L, 20 F-L, 21 F-L, 22 F-L, and 23 F-L. CDC's Division of Global Migration and Quarantine is distributing this information to appropriate local and state health departments and national public health authorities, who in turn will advise passengers of their potential for exposure. In addition, these passengers will be advised to monitor their health for 21 days (i.e., the maximum incubation period) after their travel on Continental Flight 29. For airline passengers, this 21-day period ends September 14, 2004 and NOT September 18 as was incorrectly stated in the previous HAN. During this time, passengers should report a fever 101oF or greater to their local or state health department.

Based upon currently available information and the configuration of the aircraft, only passengers seated in these 20 seat locations are considered to be at low risk of exposure. While no specific evaluation or monitoring is currently advised for persons seated in rows other than those listed above, any passenger who traveled on the implicated flight and who has concerns or develops a fever of 101oF or greater should seek medical evaluation and contact public health authorities.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) protects people's health and safety by preventing and controlling diseases and injuries; enhances health decisions by providing credible information on critical health issues; and promotes healthy living through strong partnerships with local, national and international organizations.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES