

Tech company develops Ebola virus detection test *New test to be available early next year*

By Rob Roblin, 10/24/2014

Company officials said the test will be fast and accurate. It will detect Ebola on surfaces.

Located in University of Maryland BioPark, PathSensors has developed technology to detect anything from salmonella to the nerve agent ricin.

“Technology has been used by the Department of Defense for seven years. We protect buildings from biological attacks. It’s also being used by the Department of Agriculture and one of the things the USDA really likes is the ability to be able to take the technology in the field. It’s very easy to use,” said Ted Olsen, with PathSensors, Inc.



The company is developing a test that will reveal the presence of Ebola on surfaces. Using a special solution, the surface is swabbed. That material is placed in a special device, spinning at a high rate of speed. When that’s completed the material is placed in a special piece of testing equipment. Using canary technology it can detect the presence of Ebola that’s revealed on a computer screen. The whole process takes only a few minutes.

“It will take five minutes from start to finish, including sample prep. The test is extraordinarily sensitive. It’s probably the most sensitive test on the market,” said Jeanette Simpson, with PathSensors Inc. “The technician will be guided through all asking steps via proprietary software program that we’ve developed so there will be less than half an hour training needed.”

The idea is to be able to let the public know if Ebola is present in a certain area and do it quickly.

“Well, it would be valuable, I imagine, in two ways: one is to get real data as how much virus is in the environment by someone very early in the disease versus someone late in the disease,” said Dr. Alan Schmaljohn, with the University of Maryland.

If everything goes as planned, the new test should be ready by early next year.