



SEVERE ACUTE RESPIRATORY SYNDROME

Public Health Guidance for Community-Level Preparedness and Response to Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) Version 2

Supplement G: Communication and Education

Goals

- Instill and maintain public confidence in the nation's public health system and its ability to respond to and manage the reappearance of SARS-CoV.
- Contribute to the maintenance of order, minimization of public panic and fear, and facilitation of public protection through the provision of accurate, rapid, and complete information before, during, and after a SARS outbreak.
- Provide accurate, consistent, and comprehensive information about SARS-CoV disease.
- Address rumors, inaccuracies, and misperceptions as quickly as possible, and prevent stigmatization of affected groups.

Key concepts

- Timely dissemination of accurate and science-based information on what is known and not known about SARS-CoV disease and the progress of the response effort builds public trust and confidence.
- Coordination of messages and release of information among federal, state, and local health officials and affected institutions are critical to avoiding contradictions and confusion that can undermine public trust and impede containment measures.
- Information should be technically correct and sufficiently complete to support policies and actions without being patronizing.
- Guidance to community members on actions needed to protect themselves and their family members and colleagues is essential for crisis management.
- Information presented during an outbreak should be limited to specific data and results; messages should omit speculation, over-interpretation of data, overly confident assessments of investigations and control measures, and comments related to other jurisdictions.
- Rumors, misinformation, misperceptions, and stigmatization of specific groups must be addressed promptly and definitively.
- Education and training of healthcare workers and public health staff on appropriate strategies to recognize SARS-CoV disease and implement control measures is key to containing a SARS outbreak.

Priority activities

- Identify key messages about SARS-CoV disease for specific audiences and the most effective methods to deliver these messages.
- Issue local public health announcements and updated information on the outbreak and response.
- Provide a location for state, local, and federal communication and emergency response.

For more information, visit www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars or call the CDC public response hotline at (888) 246-2675 (English), (888) 246-2857 (Español), or (866) 874-2646 (TTY)