



# Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS)

SARS is a new respiratory illness that is spread by close person-to-person contact.

Most cases of SARS have involved people who cared for or lived with someone with SARS, or had direct contact with infectious material from a person who has SARS.

People who have non-essential travel to mainland China and Hong Kong, Singapore, and Hanoi, Vietnam may wish to postpone their trips until further notice.

## A NEW DISEASE CALLED SARS

Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) is a respiratory illness originally reported in Asia, which has spread globally. As of April 23, the United States has had 39 cases and no deaths from SARS. 4,288 cases and 251 deaths due to SARS have been reported worldwide. For the latest information on SARS, go to:

[www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars/](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars/) and [www.who.int/csr/sars/en/](http://www.who.int/csr/sars/en/).

## SYMPTOMS OF SARS

In general, SARS begins with a **fever greater than 100.4°F** [ $>38.0^{\circ}\text{C}$ ]. Other symptoms may include **headache**, an overall feeling of **discomfort**, and **body aches**. Some people also experience mild **respiratory symptoms**. After 2 - 7 days, SARS patients may develop a **dry cough** and have **trouble breathing**.

## HOW SARS SPREADS

SARS appears to spread by **close person-to-person contact**. Most cases of SARS have involved people who cared for or lived with someone with SARS, or had direct contact with infectious material (for example, respiratory secretions) from a person who has SARS. Potential ways in which SARS can be spread include touching the skin of other people or objects that are contaminated with infectious droplets and then touching your eye(s), nose, or mouth. This can happen when someone who is sick with SARS coughs or sneezes droplets onto themselves, other people, or nearby surfaces. It also is possible that SARS can be spread through the air or by other ways that are currently not known.

## WHO IS AT RISK OF SARS?

Those who have had close contact with an infected person, such as those sharing a household with a SARS patient and health-care workers who did not use infection control procedures while taking care of a SARS patient, are at increased risk. In the United States and in Europe, there is no indication that SARS has spread in the community or on commercial airlines.

## POSSIBLE CAUSES OF SARS

Scientists have detected a previously unrecognized coronavirus in patients with SARS. This coronavirus may be the culprit.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### ➤ For individuals considering travel to affected parts of Asia and Canada:

People planning nonessential travel to mainland China and Hong Kong, Singapore, and Hanoi, Vietnam may wish to postpone their trips until further notice.

[www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars/travel\\_advice.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars/travel_advice.htm)

A travel alert has been issued recommending that travelers to Toronto, Canada observe precautions to safeguard their health.

[www.cdc.gov/travel/other/sars\\_can.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/travel/other/sars_can.htm)

### US Pacific Command prohibits travel of servicemembers to China & Hong Kong.

### ➤ For individuals who think they might have SARS:

People with symptoms of SARS should cover their mouth or nose when coughing or sneezing and consult a health-care provider. Tell about any recent travel to places where SARS has been reported or whether there was contact with someone who had SARS symptoms.

### ➤ For family members caring for someone with SARS:

Basic precautions for family members should be followed for 10 days after the patient's respiratory symptoms and fever are gone.

These precautions include:

- ✓ Good hand washing – always the best!
- ✓ Surgical mask – for the patient or for you
- ✓ Disposable gloves
- ✓ No sharing of towels, bedding, and utensils

During this time, SARS patients should not go to work, school, or other public areas.

[www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars/ic-closecontacts.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars/ic-closecontacts.htm)

### ➤ For health-care workers:

Review recommendations for the management of exposures to SARS at

[www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars/exposureguidance.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars/exposureguidance.htm)

and infection control guidelines at

[www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars/infectioncontrol.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars/infectioncontrol.htm).