

Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) is a severe and often deadly illness caused by a (corona) virus (MERS-CoV). This disease was first reported in 2012. Everyone who has had MERS has had a link to countries in or near the Arabian Peninsula (Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Iran, Yemen, Oman, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, Syria, Jordan, Israel, Lebanon and the Palestinian Territories). This is a new disease and information about it is likely to change as we learn more. This fact sheet is up-to-date as of June 24, 2015.

## SYMPTOMS

Symptoms often start 5 to 6 days after being around someone with MERS, but they can begin any time between 2 days to 2 weeks. Most people have:

- fever
- a cough
- a hard time breathing

Some people also have diarrhea and vomiting. Others may have only mild cold-like symptoms or no symptoms at all.

People who are sick can also get a lung infection (pneumonia) or their kidneys may stop working. This is more likely to happen if they have other long-term illnesses (like diabetes, cancer, long-term lung, heart or kidney problems).

If you have these symptoms and have traveled to the Arabian Peninsula or spent time in a healthcare facility in Korea, go to the doctor right away and tell the doctor where you've traveled.

## TREATMENT

There is no treatment for MERS. A doctor may give people with MERS drugs to help them feel better. People who are really sick need hospital care.

## HOW IT SPREADS

The exact way the virus spreads is not well understood at this time. MERS is thought to spread from person to person when a person with MERS coughs or sneezes and others who are nearby breathe in the infected droplets. So far MERS has only spread from ill people to those that care for or live with them. If you are not a healthcare worker, the risk of getting MERS in the U.S. is very low at this time.

## PEOPLE AT RISK OF GETTING MERS

- People who have traveled to the Arabian Peninsula
- People who live with or care for an ill traveler from the Arabian Peninsula
- People who live with or care for a person with MERS
- Healthcare workers who do not use recommended infection control measures
- People who spend time around camels or eat raw camel products
- People who were in a healthcare facility in the Republic of Korea recently

## HOW TO PREVENT MERS—READ THE OTHER SIDE OF THIS PAGE

## how to prevent

# MERS (Middle East Respiratory Syndrome)

Right now there is no vaccine to prevent MERS.

### Practice good health manners to help prevent MERS and other illnesses

- Wash your hands often (see below).
- Cough and sneeze into your sleeve or cover your mouth and nose with a tissue. Wash hands after throwing the tissue away (see below).
- Do not touch your eyes, nose and mouth with hands that have not been washed.
- Stay away from sick people. Do not kiss them or share cups, plates or utensils with them.
- Clean and disinfect things that are touched by many people (like doorknobs, computers, phones)

### Handwashing

#### How to Wash



1. Wet



2. Soap



3. Scrub 15 –20 seconds



4. Rinse



5. Dry



6. Use towel to turn off faucet

#### WHEN TO WASH

- Before and after eating
- Before, during and after making and touching food
- After using the bathroom or helping a child use the bathroom
- After changing or checking a diaper
- After coughing, sneezing, blowing your nose and after wiping a child's nose
- After touching blood or body fluids (urine, feces, vomit, etc)
- After touching animals or their waste
- After touching trash
- After touching money
- Whenever hands look, feel or smell dirty

Washing hands is the best way to prevent the spread of many illnesses. No soap and water? Use a hand sanitizer made with alcohol (follow package directions) – then wash with soap and water as soon as you can.