

# Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (MERS-CoV) fact sheet



Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (MERS-CoV), is a new virus that has not been seen in humans before. In most cases, it has caused severe disease. Death has occurred in about half of all cases. It is not known where the virus came from or exactly how it spreads.

So far, there are no reports of anyone in the United States getting infected with MERS-CoV. All reported cases have been linked to five countries in the Arabian Peninsula: Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Jordan, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Oman.

There is no vaccine or specific treatment for the virus. THD advises that people follow these tips to help prevent respiratory illnesses:

## *Symptoms and Care*

Most people infected with MERS-CoV develop severe acute respiratory illness. Symptoms include: fever, cough, and shortness of breath. There is no vaccine to prevent MERS-CoV infection. There is no specific medication to treat MERS-CoV, only supportive and medical care to relieve symptoms.

## *Transmission*

MERS-CoV has been shown to spread from infected people to others through close contact, such as caring for or living with an infected person. The virus has also spread in hospitals, including the largest outbreak that began in April 2013, in eastern Saudi Arabia.

## *Risk*

Most people infected with MERS-CoV had pre-existing health conditions, and often weakened immune systems, before they contracted the virus. People with existing health conditions or weakened immune systems may be more likely to become infected with MERS-CoV or have a severe case.

## *Case History*

The first known cases of MERS-CoV occurred in Jordan in April 2012, however, most of the reported cases have occurred since April 2013.

As of November 15, 2013\*, 153 laboratory-confirmed cases were reported to the World Health Organization. Of those cases, 64 were fatal. All diagnosed cases have been linked to five countries (Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Oman or Jordan). Most infected people either lived in one of these countries or recently traveled there. To date, no cases have been reported in the United States.

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## *Prevention*

Follow these tips to help prevent respiratory illnesses:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds, and help young children do the same.
- If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact, such as kissing, sharing cups, or sharing eating utensils, with sick people.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces, such as toys and doorknobs.

## *Travel Recommendations*

The CDC does not recommend that anyone change their travel plans because of MERS CoV. The current travel notice is a Watch (Level1) which advises travelers to countries in and near the Arabian Peninsula to follow standard precautions, such as handwashing and avoiding contact with people who are ill.

## *Recommendations for Health Care Providers*

Healthcare providers should watch for patients who develop severe acute lower respiratory illness within 14 days after traveling from countries in and near the Arabian Peninsula, excluding those who only transited at airport regions.

*For current case information, visit\**

<http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/mers/>