



SARS FACT SHEET

What is SARS?

Severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) is a viral respiratory illness that was recognized as a global threat in March 2003. SARS is caused by a coronavirus called SARS-associated coronavirus (SARS-CoV).

How can you be exposed to SARS?

The primary way that SARS appears to spread is by close person-to-person contact. The virus is likely to be transmitted when a person comes in contact with the droplets produced by the sneeze or cough of an infected person. The virus can also spread when a person touches a surface or object that has been contaminated with the virus and then touches his or her mouth, nose or eye(s). Close contact with an infected person has the highest risk of spreading SARS to others.

What are the symptoms of SARS?

- high fever
- chills, headache and body aches
- pneumonia

How soon after exposure do symptoms appear?

Most people will begin to have symptoms within 2 to 7 days. In some cases, it has been as long as 10 days.

How long is a person with SARS contagious to others?

People who have SARS can most likely spread the virus to others from the time symptoms begin. However, SARS is most contagious during the second week of illness. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that persons with or suspected of having SARS should limit their contact with others until 10 days after SARS symptoms have gone away.

What medical treatment is recommended for patients with SARS?

People who are suspected of having SARS receive the same treatment recommended for all serious respiratory illnesses.

If there is another outbreak of SARS, how can I protect myself?

It is important to wash your hands with soap and water or to use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer to prevent the spread of respiratory illness. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unclean hands and encourage people around you to cover their nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.

Where can I get more information about SARS?

www.cdc.gov

www.who.org

www.dshs.state.tx.us

Source of Information

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)