



MERS CoV

What is MERS Co-V?

Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) is a viral respiratory illness caused by a coronavirus called “Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus” (MERS-CoV). It is different from other coronaviruses found in people before.

How does MERS-CoV spread from person to person?

MERS-CoV has spread between people who are in close contact. Spread from infected patients to healthcare personnel has also been observed.

What are the signs and symptoms?

Most people who got infected with MERS-CoV developed severe acute respiratory illness with symptoms of fever, cough, and shortness of breath. Some people had a mild respiratory illness.

Am I at risk?

The risk to an individual traveler, to the Middle East, of contracting MERS-CoV is considered very low. You are not considered to be at risk for MERS-CoV infection if you have not had close contact, such as caring for or living with someone who is being evaluated for MERS-CoV infection.

Can I travel to countries where MERS cases have occurred?

Yes. CDC does not recommend that anyone change their travel plans because of MERS. Travelers to these areas who have a pre-existing major medical condition (e.g. chronic diseases such as diabetes or chronic bronchitis, immunodeficiency) should be aware that these conditions can increase the likelihood of more severe medical problems, associated with MERS-CoV infection. Thus, they should consult a health care provider before travelling, to review the risk and assess whether the travel is medically advisable.

Travelers going to countries in or near the Arabian Peninsula to provide health care services, should practice CDC’s recommendations for infection control of confirmed or suspected cases and monitor their health closely.

What if I have recently travelled to countries where MERS cases have occurred and got sick?

If you develop a fever and symptoms of respiratory illness, such as cough or shortness of breath, within 14 days after traveling from countries in or near the Arabian Peninsula, you should contact your healthcare provider and mention your recent travel.

What are the treatments for MERS Co-V?

There are no specific treatments recommended for illnesses caused by MERS-CoV. Medical care is supportive and to help relieve symptoms.

How can I protect myself?

There is no vaccine against MERS Co-V.

People should follow these tips to help prevent respiratory illnesses:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water. 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.

Adapted from:

Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS). Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2015

(<http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/mers/faq.html> accessed June 25 2015)