



# MERS-CoV

## Middle Eastern Respiratory Syndrome - Coronavirus

# الكورونا الجديد

متلازمة الشرق الأوسط التنفسية  
"ميرس"

**What you should know about  
MERS-CoV and traveling to the  
Middle East**



**Traveled Recently?**  
If you have recently traveled to the Middle East, please take this online traveler's health survey by going to this site:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/ACCESS2013Travel>



Michigan Department of Community Health  
Division of Communicable Disease

Michigan Department of Community Health



Rick Snyder, Governor  
James K. Haveman, Director

517-335-8165

[www.michigan.gov/mdch](http://www.michigan.gov/mdch)

Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services (ACCESS)



Community Health & Research Center

6450 Maple  
Dearborn, MI 48126  
313-216-2200

[www.accesscommunity.org](http://www.accesscommunity.org)



### Other Useful

#### Sources of Information:

[www.michigan.gov/cdinfo](http://www.michigan.gov/cdinfo)

[www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/MERS/](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/MERS/)

<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices>

[saudiembassy.net/services/hajj\\_requirements.aspx](http://saudiembassy.net/services/hajj_requirements.aspx)

# Middle Eastern Respiratory Syndrome – Coronavirus (MERS-CoV)

## Frequently Asked Questions

**Q: What is MERS?**

**A:** Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) is a viral respiratory illness. MERS is caused by a coronavirus called “Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus” (MERS-CoV).

**Q: What is MERS-CoV?**

**A:** MERS-CoV was first reported in 2012 in Saudi Arabia. MERS-CoV used to be called “novel coronavirus,” or “nCoV”. It is different from other coronaviruses that have been found in people before.

**Q: What are the symptoms of MERS?**

**A:** Most people who got infected with MERS-CoV developed severe acute respiratory illness with symptoms of fever, cough, and shortness of breath. About half of them died. Some people were reported as having a mild respiratory illness.

**Q: Does MERS-CoV spread from person to person?**

**A:** MERS-CoV has been shown to spread between people who are in close contact. Transmission from infected patients to healthcare personnel has also been observed. Clusters of cases are currently being investigated. Avoid contact with people that are sick.

**Q: Has anyone in the United States gotten infected?**

**A:** So far, there are no reports of anyone in the United States getting infected with MERS-CoV.

**Q: How can I help protect myself?**

**A:** It is advised that people 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 or sharing cups or eating utensils, with sick people.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces, such as toys and doorknobs.

**Q: Is there a vaccine?**

**A:** Not at this time.

**Q: What are the treatments?**

**A:** There are no specific treatments for MERS. Medical care is supportive and may help to relieve symptoms.

## Traveling Recommendations

WHO and CDC have not issued travel health warnings for any country related to MERS to date.

The virus can spread from person to person through close contact, so Hajj and Umrah pilgrims who are living and traveling in close quarters may be at risk.

Pilgrims can help protect themselves from respiratory illnesses by washing their hands often; not touching their mouth, nose, or eyes; avoiding contact with sick people; and avoiding unnecessary contact with farm, domestic, and wild animals. Pilgrims should also practice good food safety such as not eating undercooked meats and properly washing fruits and vegetables.

If you have a major medical condition, talk to your healthcare provider to see if the pilgrimage is advisable.

Make an appointment with a travel medicine doctor at least 4–6 weeks before your trip. A travel medicine doctor can provide any vaccines or medicines you will need for your trip. You can take other precautions to reduce your risk of illness and injury:

- Be up-to-date on routine immunizations, including a yearly flu shot.
- Try to avoid the most crowded areas, or areas without enough exits.
- Always know where emergency exits and medical facilities are.
- Avoid gatherings where political or religious fervor could promote violent behavior.

## What to do if you Become Sick

If you develop a fever with cough or difficulty breathing within 14 days after traveling from countries in the Arabian Peninsula or neighboring countries<sup>1</sup>, you should call your doctor and mention your recent travel as soon as possible. This may help you to feel better soon and also help protect your family and friends from becoming sick.

If you do not have a doctor, call to an urgent care clinic or local emergency room or you can call the local health department for advice. Wear a face mask if you go to a doctor’s office or ask for one as soon as you arrive. Tell the doctor about your symptoms and recent travel.

Other things you can do to help protect others from getting sick:

- When you cough or sneeze, cover your nose and mouth with a tissue or wear a face mask. Throw used tissues in a trash can.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water – especially after you cough or sneeze. If not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Stay home from work or school until you feel better or until a doctor says it is OK to go back.

<sup>1</sup>Countries in the Arabian Peninsula and neighboring countries: Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Palestinian territories, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Yemen.