



PUBLIC FACT SHEET

SEVERE ACUTE RESPIRATORY SYNDROME (SARS)

What is SARS?

SARS is a respiratory illness that was first reported in Asia in February 2003, but later spread to North America, South America, and Europe.

How is SARS spread?

SARS is spread directly from person to person through coughing and sneezing. The virus can also be spread when a person touches a surface or other object contaminated with infectious droplets and then touches their mouth, nose or eyes.

What are the symptoms?

At first SARS may resemble the flu. Symptoms may include:

- fever greater than 100.4°
- headache
- body aches
- mild cough
- 10% to 20% may also have diarrhea

After 2 to 7 days SARS patients may develop a dry cough which can progress to pneumonia and severe difficulty breathing.

What is the treatment for SARS?

Many drugs are being tested but there is presently no specific treatment for SARS.

What should I do if I think I have SARS?

Contact your physician or health-care provider. Tell them about any recent trips you have taken to places where SARS has been reported or of any contact that you may have had with an infected person.

How can SARS be prevented?

If you are in an area where SARS has been reported:

- wash your hands frequently with soap and water
- avoid close contact with large numbers of people as much as possible
- the routine use of masks or other personal protective equipment in public areas is not necessary or recommended

Travel advisories should be checked before traveling outside the United States. These advisories can be found on the CDC and World Health Organization (WHO) websites as listed below. Travel information can also be obtained at the Ottawa County Health Department.

For more information on SARS contact:

Ottawa County Health Department

www.miOttawa.org

Center for Disease Control and Prevention

www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars/

Phone: (888) 246-2675

World Health Organization

www.who.int/csr/sars/en/