



MACOMB COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

SEVERE ACUTE RESPIRATORY SYNDROME (SARS)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

What is SARS?

- Severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) is a viral respiratory illness that was first reported in Asia in February 2003.
- The outbreak spread to at least 29 countries in North America, South America, Europe and Asia before its containment in July 2003.
- During this outbreak, 8,098 people worldwide became sick with SARS, result-

What are the signs and symptoms of SARS?

- High fever (greater than 100.4° F)
- Chills
- Headache
- General feeling of discomfort
- Body aches
- Mild respiratory symptoms
- Dry cough
- Pneumonia
- Diarrhea (10-20% of cases)

How is SARS spread?

- SARS is mainly spread by close person-to-person contact, including kissing or embracing, sharing eating or drinking utensils, close conversation (within three feet) or physical contact. Close contact does not include walking near a person or sitting across a waiting room or office for a brief time.
- Direct contact with secretions and/or body fluids of a SARS patient may also transmit the disease.
- Most exposures occur in healthcare facilities and households with SARS patients
- Community transmission outside of these settings has been reported, but is rare.
- It is possible that the SARS virus might be spread more broadly through the air or by other ways that are not yet known.



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

How long would it take to become sick after being exposed to SARS (incubation period)?

Symptoms start 2-7 days after exposure, although in some cases it may be up to 10 days.

How long is a person with SARS infectious to others?

- People with SARS are most likely to be infectious only when they have symptoms.
- However, as a precaution against spreading the disease, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that people with SARS avoid work, school and other interactions outside the home for 10 days after their symptoms have gone away.

How is SARS treated?

- The CDC recommends that SARS patients receive the same treatment used for serious pneumonia.
- Antiviral drugs are being studied for treatment.
- Factors that might influence illness progression and recovery are also being studied. The factors could be related to the virus itself, how the body's immune system reacts to the virus, or treatment of the infection.

What measures can be taken to contain a SARS outbreak?

In the event of another SARS outbreak, the public health system will take careful and thorough precautions to prevent its spread, including:

- surveillance
- identification and isolation of SARS cases
- infection control
- intense contact tracing
- quarantine of persons who may have been exposed to SARS

These measures can be a temporary inconvenience to those involved but are essential for containing SARS outbreaks.

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

Follow these common-sense precautions that apply to many infectious diseases.

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rubs.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unclean hands.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.

SEVERE ACUTE RESPIRATORY SYNDROME (SARS)**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)****Is it safe to travel to other countries outside of the U.S.?**

At this time, there is no evidence of ongoing transmission of SARS anywhere in the world. In the absence of SARS transmission, there is no need for concern about travel or other activities.

How can I get health advisories or alerts?

- In the event of a public health threat or emergency, the Macomb County Health Department will make frequent public announcements.
- List to local radio and TV for more information. You may also visit <http://macombcountymi.gov/publichealth> or call 586-466-7923 for instructions.

MORE SARS INFORMATION

SARS: Michigan Prepares (MDCH/OPHP)
http://michigan.gov/michiganprepares/0,1607,7-232-42878_42886_43063-148395--00.html

SARS (CDC)
<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars/>

SARS (WHO)
<http://www.who.int/topics/sars/en/>

Call the CDC at **1-800-CDC-INFO** or **1-888-232-6348** (TTY).

CONTACT INFORMATION

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<http://macombcountymi.gov/publichealth>