



## What is a coronavirus?

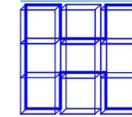
Coronaviruses typically cause symptoms that are similar to those of the common cold. However, they can also cause more severe illness including pneumonia and death. The SARS virus was a type of coronavirus.



### Lake of the Woods District Hospital

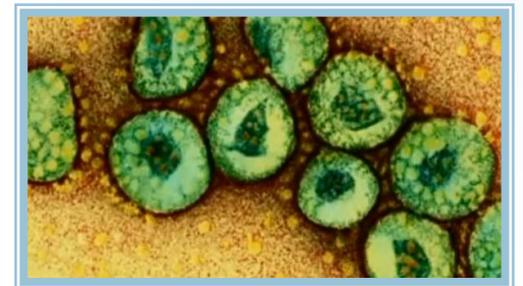
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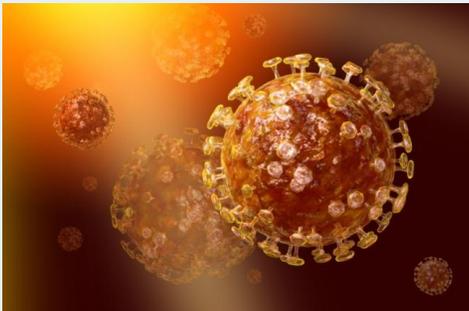
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LAKE OF THE WOODS  
DISTRICT HOSPITAL

## Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus Information Sheet





## What is the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus?

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The Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (MERS-CoV) is a new kind of coronavirus that had not been known to public health officials prior to 2012, when it was first reported in Saudi Arabia. This is a rare virus that can cause serious illness, including death in the few persons who have contracted it. It remains very rare and difficult to spread to others. However, persons who have other chronic medical conditions that affect their ability to fight off infections may be at a higher risk of developing illness as a result of having been exposed to the virus.

## What are the main symptoms associated with MERS-CoV?

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For most known cases of illness, the main symptoms are fever and cough as well as shortness of breath and breathing difficulties; pneumonia is the most common complication. About half the people known to be infected with MERS-CoV died as a result of complications. However, some of the people infected reported mild respiratory illness, with symptoms similar to those of the common cold. Some people with MERS-CoV have developed kidney failure. People with existing medical conditions are more likely to experience more serious complications.

## What is the treatment for MERS-CoV?

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Current treatment is aimed at supporting the symptoms including medical support and treatment of any complications. There is no vaccine or specific treatment for this virus.

## How is MERS-CoV Spread?

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It is believed that the main method of spread is through close contact with an individual infected with the virus. The virus appears to be spread by droplets when people cough or sneeze. Common surfaces such as countertops or faucets may also become contaminated with the droplets, and infection may be spread when individuals touch these surfaces then touch their face.

## What if I have been in contact with someone who has MERS-CoV?

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In order to prevent the MERS-CoV virus from spreading it is important to identify as soon as possible any symptoms that you may develop if you get sick. This will reduce the chance of you spreading the virus to others. Staff from the public health unit will call you every day for 14 days after your last contact with the person who had MERS-CoV to find out how you are feeling and ask you questions in order to monitor any symptoms you may be having, including taking your temperature daily.

## What do I need to do?

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If you live in the same home as a person with MERS-CoV infection, try to stay at least two metres (six feet) away from them as much as possible to avoid coming in contact with the virus. Try not to touch your eyes, nose or mouth as the living environment may be contaminated with the virus. If

If you are providing care to a person with MERS-CoV or are within two metres of them:

- Wear a procedure mask and eye protection
- You should wear gloves when you touch the ill person or their surroundings (e.g., their night table, used tissues).
- Gloves should be removed as soon as you are not interacting with them and then clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol or with soap and running water.
- Clean your hands before touching your face.
- If you are at high risk for complication from MERS-CoV infection (e.g., if you have chronic disease such as heart or lung disease, if you are immunocompromised or over the age of 65) you should not care for or come within two metres of the ill person.

Don't share drinks, eating utensils, toothbrush, cigarettes, towels, washcloth or bed linen with individuals who are ill with MERS-CoV. Dishes and eating utensils can be washed as usual with dish soap and water. Linen and towels can be washed as usual in the washing machine and do not need to be separated from other laundry.

Always cover your coughs or sneezes with your sleeve or tissues then clean your hands as described above.

If you develop symptoms, call your local health unit and also contact your usual health care provider. If you develop sudden difficulty breathing, call 911 and let them know that you were in contact with an individual with MERS-CoV infection. Do not leave your house except to seek health care.