



MERS-CoV (Middle East Respiratory Syndrome)

What is MERS-CoV?

It is an emerging viral respiratory illness caused by a Coronavirus (among the kind of viruses that cause the common cold but it can cause more severe illness with flu-like symptoms). The virus was first reported in Saudi Arabia and this is how it came about its name of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS). There have been a few documented cases in the United States but the individuals had recently been in the Arabian Peninsula.

What is the Source of MERS-CoV?

Researchers do not know where the virus came from, although it likely originates from an animal source. It has been found in camels and bats. People may have become infected after contact with camels, although more research is needed to figure out the possible role that camels, bats and other animals may play in transmission.

Does the virus spread quickly among humans?

The risk to Canadians is low as MERS-CoV does not spread easily from person to person. Although experts are investigating its source and how it spreads, it is not fully understood exactly how people become infected. In cases where it appears to have spread between people, the cases involved close contacts: family members, co-workers, fellow patients and healthcare workers.

What are the Symptoms of the Infection?

Coronaviruses can cause a range of illness from the common cold to severe cases of pneumonia and death. The symptoms of MERS-CoV are similar to a severe pneumonia: sudden and serious respiratory illness with fever, cough, shortness of breath and breathing difficulties.

What are the current Infection Prevention and Control Measures for safety?

Those symptomatic patients who have travelled from the Arabian Peninsula within 14 days before onset of illness should be suspected to have MERS-CoV. They should be cared for in single patient rooms when possible with a dedicated toilet and sink. As with any patient who has influenza like illness (fever, cough, shortness of breath, acute respiratory illness) they should be immediately placed on Droplet and Contact Precautions. Staff should wear the appropriate Personal Protective equipment. When

performing aerosol generating procedures (i.e. intubation, bronchoscopy) Airborne precautions should be initiated during the procedure.

Where can I find out more information on this Emerging Virus?

The Public Health Agency of Canada

<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/eri-ire/coronavirus/index-eng.php>

Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness

http://www.novascotia.ca/dhw/cdpc/documents/Severe-Acute-Respiratory_Infection-SARI-Protocol.pdf

The World Health Organization

http://www.who.int/csr/disease/coronavirus_infections/faq/en/

Public Health Ontario

http://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/eRepository/PIDAC-IPC_Preparedness_Tools_MERS_CoV_2013.pdf

The CDC

<http://www.cdc.gov/CORONAVIRUS/MERS/INDEX.HTML>