

Appendix 3-H

Information Sheet for Close Contacts of SARS Patients

SARS

This fact sheet gives information about the illness and important instructions for close contacts of SARS patients to prevent the spread of severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS). SARS is a viral respiratory illness caused by a coronavirus, called SARS-associated coronavirus (SARS-CoV). SARS was first reported in Asia in February 2003.

What does “close contact” mean?

In the context of SARS, close contact means caring for or living with someone with SARS or having direct contact with respiratory secretions or body fluids of a patient with SARS. Examples of close contact include kissing or hugging, sharing eating or drinking utensils, talking to someone within 3 feet, and touching someone directly. Close contact does not include activities like walking by a person or sitting across a waiting room or office for a brief time.

How SARS spreads

The main way that SARS seems to spread is by close person-to-person contact. The virus that causes SARS is thought to be transmitted most readily by respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Droplets from the cough or sneeze are propelled a short distance (generally up to 3 feet) through the air and may be deposited on the mouth, nose, or eyes of persons who are nearby. The virus also can spread when a person touches a surface or object contaminated with infectious droplets and then touches his or her mouth, nose, or eye(s). In addition, it is possible that the SARS virus might spread more broadly through the air (airborne spread) or by other ways that are not known.

If you have had close contact with or are caring for someone at home who has SARS, you should:

- Be sure that the person with SARS has seen a health-care provider.
- Be sure that all household members of the person with SARS are washing their hands frequently with soap and hot water or using alcohol-based hand wash.
- Wear disposable gloves if you have direct contact with body fluids of a SARS patient. However, the wearing of gloves is not a substitute for good hand hygiene. After contact with body fluids of a SARS patient, remove the gloves, throw them out, and wash your hands. Do not wash or reuse the gloves.
- Household members should encourage the person with SARS to cover their mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.
- If possible, the person with SARS should wear a surgical mask during close contact with other people in the home. If the person with SARS cannot wear a

surgical mask, other members of the household should wear one when in the room with that person.

- Do not use silverware, towels, bedding, clothing, or other items that have been used by the person with SARS until these items have been washed with soap and hot water.
- Clean surfaces (counter or tabletops, door knobs, bathroom fixtures, etc.) that have been contaminated by body fluids (sweat, saliva, mucous, or even vomit or urine) with a household disinfectant used according to the manufacturer's instructions. Wear disposable gloves during all cleaning activities. Throw these out when done. Do not reuse them.
- Follow these instructions for 10 days after the last contact with the person with SARS or 10 days after fever has gone away and respiratory symptoms are improving.
- If you develop a fever or respiratory symptoms, contact your health care provider and the local health department immediately and tell them that you have had close contact with a SARS patient.

YOU MUST FOLLOW THESE INSTRUCTIONS TO PREVENT OTHERS FROM BECOMING ILL.