



SEVERE ACUTE RESPIRATORY SYNDROME (SARS) FACT SHEET

WHAT IS SARS?

Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) is a respiratory illness caused by a virus. Since 2004, there have not been any known cases of SARS reported anywhere in the world.

HOW DO YOU GET SARS?

- The main way that SARS seems to spread is by close person-to-person contact typically by coughing or sneezing.
- The virus can also spread when a person touches a contaminated surface or object and then touches his/her mouth, nose or eyes.
- The virus may spread more broadly through the air or by other ways that are not now known.

SYMPTOMS

In general, SARS begins with a high fever. Other symptoms may include headache, an overall feeling of discomfort, and body aches. Some people also have mild respiratory symptoms. Some people may have diarrhea. After 2 to 7 days, a dry cough may develop. Most infected individuals develop pneumonia.

TREATMENT

Treatment choices may be determined by the severity of the illness. Discuss treatment options with your doctor.

PREVENTION

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds, and help young children do the same. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands. Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and objects, such as doorknobs.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.

DGHD EFFORTS

Reports of suspected and confirmed cases of disease are made to the Delaware General Health District (DGHD). The DGHD investigates potential sources of illness, conducts surveillance for the spread of disease, and engages in community outreach and education.