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**FACTS&details**

about Sedgwick County Government

May 2014

## Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (MERS-CoV)

### What is the situation?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Indiana State Department of Health are conducting an active, joint investigation of the first case of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (MERS-CoV) in the United States. The CDC confirmed the virus in a traveler on May 2, 2014, who had provided medical care in Saudi Arabia. Symptoms on May 2, 2014. No other cases in the U.S. have been identified.

### What is MERS-CoV?

MERS-CoV is a viral respiratory illness. It is different from other coronaviruses that have been previously found in people. According to the CDC, since the virus was first identified in April 2012, there have been more than 400 confirmed cases of MERS-CoV infection, including more than 90 deaths. To date, all reported cases have been linked to countries in or near the Arabian Peninsula.

### How do you get it/how is it spread?

Human-to-human spread of MERS-CoV has occurred, but the virus hasn't shown the ability to be easily spread person to person. It is unknown what route of transmission is causing it to spread, whether respiratory (e.g. coughing, sneezing) or contact (contamination of the environment by an infected person).

### What are the symptoms?

Symptoms of MERS-CoV can range from mild to severe and can include a fever, cough, shortness of breath, pneumonia, kidney failure, and diarrhea. People can die from this infection.

### Who is at risk?

The United States general public is at very low risk for getting sick with MERS-CoV. People who travel to the Arabian Peninsula or neighboring countries, or who have close contact with an ill traveler may be at risk. People with an underlying medical condition, such as an immune system that cannot fight off infections well, may be at greater risk.

### What can I do to protect myself?

Since neither the source of the virus nor how it is spread is absolutely known, it is not possible to give specific advice on prevention of infection. Taking everyday actions can help prevent the spread of germs and protect against colds, flu and other illnesses. Everyday actions include the following:

- Washing your hands with soap and water. If they are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Avoid close contact with sick people.
- Check to make sure you are up-to-date on your vaccinations and if possible, see your healthcare provider at least four to six weeks before travel to get any additional shots.
- If you are sick, cover your mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze and avoid contact with other people to keep from infecting them.

### If I develop respiratory symptoms, what should I do?

You should see a healthcare provider if you develop a fever and symptoms of lower respiratory illness, such as cough or shortness of breath, within 14 days after traveling from countries in or near the Arabian Peninsula. Be sure to tell the provider about your recent travel. At this time, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) does not recommend travel restrictions.



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### Countries with lab-confirmed MERS Cases

Countries in the Arabian Peninsula with cases:

- Saudi Arabia
- United Arab Emirates (UAE)
- Qatar
- Oman
- Jordan
- Kuwait

Countries with travel-associated cases:

- United Kingdom (UK)
- France
- Tunisia
- Italy
- Malaysia
- United States of America (USA)

### For More Information:

Contact Sedgwick County Health Department at  
316-660-7300 or visit the Sedgwick County website at  
[www.sedgwickcounty.org](http://www.sedgwickcounty.org).

CDC press release:

<http://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2014/p0502-US-MERS.html>

CDC MERS website:

<http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/mers/>

CDC Travelers' Health

<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices/alert/coronavirus-arabian-peninsula-uk>

World Health Organization:

[http://www.who.int/csr/disease/coronavirus\\_infections/en/](http://www.who.int/csr/disease/coronavirus_infections/en/).